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A SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF THE MINISTRY OF ETHICAL

MEANINGS THROUGH DIALOGUE

A Dissertation

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Doctor of Religion

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by

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This dissertation, written by

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CHAPTER I

THE TEACHING OF ETHICS

Throughout the United States, and in pockets of Western civilization in other parts of the world, people have become enamored by the "new" hang-loose ethic. In such a culture, how can the church engage in a ministry of ethical meanings? Would not ethical meanings fall broken and useless at the feet of the iconoclasts? Have they not already cast down the entire value system of the so-called Protestant Ethic? What possibility is there now, with any kind of ethical theory, to teach ethics? Ethics, as such, appears irrelevant.

The hang-loose pattern of life, of course, does have ethical concern.[1] Its idealistic humanism seeks to avoid the hypocrisy of the elders. Its pursuit of direct experience is made the only criterion for what is good or bad. Its attitude of toleration overlooks the superficial qualities of wealth or race. Its decision to be spontaneous allows quick response to calls of need or pleasure. The hang-loose pattern suggests a radical lack of dimension. It is what a news columnist once called instantism. It cares little for the ethos of the past, except as a garden of values from which one may pluck truths of momentary usefulness. It looks at the future, but with deliberate carelessness. It does not let the cares of the morrow intrude upon the experiences of today. Its time is the present, and

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[1]Cf. J. I. Simmons and Barry Winograd, It's Happening, (Santa Barbara: Marc-Laird Publications, 1966), Chapter II.

the present determines the value of everything: "Is it good for now?"

There are two ways of replying to the question about teaching ethics to a hang-loose generation. The first concerns a more accurate description of the persons involved. We recognize that very few young people are truly following in the train of the "flower children." The diversity of life-styles among people in the United States should remind teachers and ethicists that no caricature based upon fads can give a revealing picture of the moral struggles of today's citizens. Though much of the current "hippie" flavor has infected the tastes of middle and lower class cultures, the fundamental outlook remains quite foreign. Youth and young adults, walking barefooted, wearing flowered shirts, studying in postered rooms, have adopted the mood, but have not adopted the ethical style, the decision-making style. The customary rule ethic, the utilitarian ethic, the law ethic all still have great power as a way of living in community. Can ethics be taught? It can, if recognition is given to the pluralism of our society, and an ethical theory and teaching method can be developed which will encourage a deepening of concern and an intimacy of relationship.

Thus, the second answer to our question concerns the process of teaching. A theory of teaching can take one into many different modes of relation: information giving, habit training, ideological indoctrination, problem solving, training in reasoning and discourse, experience-centered learning through trial and error. Just how does one teach ethics?

The newer church school curriculums being produced for the 1960's and 1970's stress a kind of teaching which centers upon action

within the class setting and training in ethical reflection. In other words, it provides for decision-making situations and demands or provokes thought about "what happened" or "what might happen" by those involved. The aim here is, first of all, training in a way of ethical thinking, and secondly the incorporation of the Christian message into the process. The result, hopefully, is the meeting in the conscience of each person of the Word of God and realities of life, so that the decisions that are made may be decisions based upon a sense of the moral imperative and worked out in each situation.

Though curriculum planners today admit the variety of many teaching media, they are relying particularly on the function of small group discussion, reflection, exploration, and planning. And at the heart of this function is a teacher-student relation and inter-student relation called conversation or dialogue. What occurs in the dialogue, and whether dialogue really occurs at all, may largely determine the success or failure of the other preliminary and subsidiary teaching activities. It is for this reason that a clearly stated theory of dialogical teaching, and its relevance to the ministry of ethical meanings, has become the topic of this study. In addition, and of even more import, is the conviction that dialogical teaching is the kind of responsible teaching required in a day of moral uncertainty and searching. Dialogical teaching confirms a person in his being while he establishes an identity in relation to reality about him. It launches him into an examination of ideologies, and a re-examination of "where he really stands" without exposing him to loss of selfhood and personal worth. It places him before others in a relation of

immediate responsibility and enables him to account for himself as one before judgment, thus confirming his sense of care for others before God. It enlightens him, through mutual reflection, about the person he is called to be, and sharpens his own sense of vocation. In dialogical teaching the ethical meanings emerge from the event of dialogue, as well as from the subject-matter of the dialogue. Dialogical teaching is called a ministry because it enables the participants in the dialogue to become persons of faith strengthened to respond to the love and grace of God.

Purpose

The professional purpose of this study is to formulate a broadly conceived theoretical basis for one of the major tasks of the Christian teaching ministry: reflection upon ethical meanings. The church as a community of faith and mission provides a setting for moral discourse prior to, and following, actions of ethical significance. It is true, of course, that the church is called to lead people into serious confrontation with the moral issues of the time, and to develop structures and instruments for Christian action. This study assumes that such a ministry of direct action does indeed occur in many church groups, or could occur under the guidance of vigorous leadership. However, the purpose of this study is not to deal with Christian social policy. It is to examine a method for the clarification of the bases for decision-making. It is to present the dialogical function of teaching as a form of moral discourse which may enable Christians, and indeed non-Christians, to fulfill their

ministry for each other and within their total community.

Scope

This study on the ministry of ethical meanings must necessarily be limited. By its very nature it has a breadth which reaches into several major areas of scholarly discipline, namely philosophy of religion, theology, ethics, personality theory, social psychology and education. This kind of far-reaching integration of ideas must result in a lack of rigorous, detailed analysis in any of these areas. It is hoped that the limitation in this respect may be partially overcome by focusing attention in some depth upon the literature provided for us by one or two persons in each field of study.

One serious limitation in this study is the omission of explicit theory regarding inter-group dynamics. Yet, the effort to define dialogue as a social setting for ethical decisions, and the kind of relational theory represented by H. Richard Niebuhr's social existentialism may aid in bringing this dimension to our attention.

This study is not a research project, but a systematic study, in a "dialogical spirit," of the literature and theory in the various disciplines concerned, drawing them into a common ministry of ethical meanings. At relevant points personal experience will be included in the discussion, mostly as illustrations of dialogue-in-action in Chapter VII.

Preview

The organization of the dissertation will demonstrate the logic and coherence of the various topics included. Briefly stated, it is

held that dialogue is an appropriate way to teach ethical meanings, that only a relational ethical theory will permit such dialogue and provide for the openness sought for by our modern generations, and that such an ethic should find its ground in ontology, revelation, and a thorough acquaintance with man as he is.

After the "Introduction" the next three chapters (II, III, IV) provide a three-dimensional view of the ethical context. The relation of "being" and "doing," of morality, to the very structures and dynamics of human existence in the world, is the subject of the first study. Based on the systematic work of Paul Tillich, it provides a solid footing for further reflection, though it does not by any means suggest that this is "the way" to structure ethical reflection. Concern for ontology will be evident in the other chapters as well. The next chapter takes up the theme of revelation and morality. The aim here is to establish within the Christian frame of reference, the function of law and order, of patterns of behavior, of the model of Christian character. It presents the kerygma as Gospel-law, and notes that the fitting response to God's action is a total response involving the establishment of a new style of life. The next chapter, concerning personality development, relates the stages of human development to the kinds of ethical meanings most relevant for people today.

Moving from these studies regarding context Chapter V continues in the trend of the first three but develops explicitly the theory of relational ethics. Based on the moral philosophy of H. Richard Niebuhr, it takes with great seriousness man's existence as a responsible moral agent, thus presenting a very live option for pure rule

morality, for in-principled ethics, for law ethics, and for the pure spontaneity of the hang-loose style.

Dialogue is not a simple conversation by any means. Therefore, the next step (VI) is a full discussion of dialogical characteristics. Here we reflect on, and respond to, the writings of Martin Buber and others. The clear affinity of Buber's work with that of the others in this study is quite visible. He, too, is deeply concerned for grounding his thought in an existentialist ontology. He, too, seeks a way of giving expression to the meaning of the Word of God. He, too, has an important word to say about the nature of man and the relational ethic that is most fitting. But we turn to him chiefly because he has brought ethics and a teaching ministry together in a dialogical style.

Drawing these strands together, and illustrating the kind of dialogical teaching that may be concluded from the previous chapters, is a chapter on "The Ministry of Ethical Meanings," (VII). No attempt is made here to form a composite picture, or collage of all views. Rather, these earlier chapters stand on their own merits. Particular stress will now be placed on the dialogical method, and direct relationships drawn between the various chapters.

The "Conclusion" will direct the study to the church setting.

CHAPTER II

BEING AND DOING: ONTOLOGY AND ETHICAL MEANINGS

The discussion of a moral issue often proceeds on pragmatic grounds: what is wrong and what can be done to correct it? What is right and what can be done to make it prevail? However, this is not the whole scheme of moral discourse. Even the small child who asks "Why? Why? Why?" has discovered the perplexing joy of probing behind reasons for ultimate reasons. And the question of ultimate reasons leads one into the field of ontology. The question of ultimate reasons is the question of ultimate ethical meanings, meanings which have a great deal to do with how a person makes crucial moral decisions.

Paul Tillich's study of ontology and morality, a major element of his theological system, is pertinent to the dialogical ministry of ethical meanings. It drives to the heart of the moral problem. It provides a basis beyond philosophical principles for moral decision-making. It clearly sets man in relation to his companions in the world. It depicts an open system of relationship, yet one which is always also tending toward restructure and closure of ethical styles. The New Being is shown to be a person who is dynamic in his newness and freedom, while at the same time he is attempting to establish himself in his newness and maintain his new status as a man. The moral dilemma, as Tillich perceives it, is the classic question of the relation of existence to essence, of "what is" to "what could be." Man, caught in the middle, is charged with the responsibility of deciding

what to do and thus what to be. Certain aspects of this dilemma will
unfold as we proceed through the chapter.

Perhaps it should be noted now, by way of prelude, that there
are obvious affinities between the "way of thinking" of Paul Tillich
and of H. Richard Niebuhr (Chapter V). These will be brought into
focus herein, but primarily as a means of "correcting" Tillich by
Niebuhr, thus revealing my own personal bias. Also, though the lines
of criticism are not explicitly drawn, I have used the basic onto-
logical approach of Tillich to correct what I understand as the more
one-sided thrust of Ebeling and Von Oppen as they consider the Chris-
tian in a new open moral situation. In my own mind I have been engag-
ing these "primary authors" in a kind of dialogue that will hopefully
bear fruit in the final study, Chapter VII.

The following commentary on "Being and Doing" attempts to
follow the reasoning of Paul Tillich as he discusses morality. It
seeks to show, first of all, the importance of ontological inquiry
for the development of ethical theory and meanings. Second, it seeks
to indicate and comment upon Tillich's symbol of theonomous morality,
and illustrate it by a discussion of self-actualization as a key to
understanding the content of the moral imperative.

Obviously the commentary is limited. The topics have been
selected because they illustrate the basic theme of the relation of
ontology to moral discourse and action, of being to doing. Other
topics may have served as well, such as Tillich's ontology of love,
power and justice, or the relation of morality, culture and religion.

I. WHY ONTOLOGY?

The first of the two parts of this commentary on Tillich's ethical theory concerns the purpose of relating ethics to ontology. In raising such a question it would appear obvious that we are asking for an answer to the question: "Why ontology at all?" "What is the purpose of ontology as such?" This brief examination will touch on the broader question, then move into the functional relation of ontology to ethics.

Ontology As a Way of Thinking

Our search for meaning requires a philosophical method which will not only analyze the language men use but probe into the meaning-reality of that language and unveil the fullest connotations of all of men's words. Therefore, the search not only requires an analysis of how men speak and act, but a description of the reality behind the speech and the reality which elicits the action. Ontology, as I see Tillich using it, is that method which is a way of thinking about the underlying meaning of words and acts, which probes into universal meanings, describes essential qualities of what it means to be, constructs on the basis of a phenomenology of being those structures and dynamics which characterize relationship, texture, and the reality of becoming and loss of being.

Ontology as a way of thinking concerns itself with universal categories, and with what I call those mental constructs which refer to the way life and all being is constituted. It is to be hoped that careful work will produce constructs that are valid, but their

verification cannot be observed experimentally. Verification of
ontological judgments, since they do not concern specific entities,
can only be derived from what Tillich calls, "the appeal to intelli-
gent recognition."[1] This appeal, I understand, may be quite adequate,
bringing forth as its witnesses the entire historical experience of
mankind as portrayed by its most effective thinkers.

What is the purpose of this way of thinking? Quite simple, it
is to know. It is to avoid superficiality and doctrinaire ideology,
by describing what is in its most adequate meaning. "Ontology,"
declares Tillich, "precedes every other cognitive approach to
reality.....One cannot escape ontology if one wants to know! For
knowing means recognizing something as being. And being is an infi-
nitely involved texture, to be described by the never-ending task of
ontology".[2]

We have said that ontology is a way of thinking in order to
know. This is to stress ontology as a unique approach to reality,
because of the uniqueness of its question, "What does it mean that
something is?" But there are many specific methodologies that deal
with the ontological question. Tillich even asserts that all efforts
to achieve knowledge have either an explicit or implicit ontology.
They elucidate the answer to "What does it mean to be?" or they
assume some kind of hidden answer as they proceed with their analysis

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[1]Paul Tillich, Love, Power and Justice, (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1960), p. 24.

[2]Ibid., p. 20.

of particular elements of being.

An analysis of being, if it is going to have existential meaning for persons, must soon become an analysis of the nature of existing man. Ontology, for all of its universal categories, its dimensions of reality, its evident polarities, only carries the weight of real meaning when man gets into its picture, and when the descriptions begin to say something about what he is, about the structures and dynamics of his life, about what he might become, about what frustrates his becoming, and about what will result in his end. These ontological considerations, dealing with man in his entire meaning-world, lead one directly into the area of the ethical, for they describe not only what man is in his existence, but also what man is in his potential, his essence. Ontology, then, from its description of what is essential being, offers the answer to the question about what man ought to be and do. He ought to do whatever will enable him to become fully in esistence what he is in essence; he ought to realize--make real--his potential selfhood.

Ontology and the Ethical Question

Ethics, in Tillich's view, is "the science of the moral," or the "theory of morals."[3] The second terminology is more acceptable than the first, as it suggests a non-empirical approach to the ethical question. Theory is a term which points to the thought constructs formulated and validated to account for and change moral behavior.

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[3]Paul Tillich, Morality and Beyond, (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 21-22.

Stephen Toulmin, in his discussion of "The Nature of Ethics,"[4] declares that science is intended to alter ones _expectations_ of reality, by indication and verification. Ethical theory, he notes is not science in this respect. It aims to _alter reality_, to alter the reality of one's own feelings and behavior, in the light of what one learns by reflection, argument or reasoning.

Following Toulmin's lead, the ethical question asks about how one may change the present condition, either of the self or of world; in other words, "What am I to do?" The contribution which ontology makes to ethical theory and this question is quite considerable. To summarize Tillich's position, ontology, by its description of actual and potential experience, bears upon the question of the nature of decision itself. It provides criteria for establishing the validity of moral acts, and insight into the motive which elicits and enables the moral act. Ontology also bears upon the content of the moral demand. It functions as a means to resolve apparent conflicts among ethical principles and relative values. Ontology establishes the nature and power of the authority of moral demands, and of the source of those demands. It also provides a means for grounding ethical theory upon an autonomous moral imperative rather than letting it flounder upon a heteronomous sea of conflict and uncertainty. Tillich expressed the relationship succinctly:

> Ethics is the science of man's moral existence, asking for the
> roots of the moral imperative, the criteria of its validity, the

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[4]Stephen E. Toulmin, _An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics_ (Cambridge: University Press, 1953).

source of its contents, the forces of its realization. The
answer to each of these questions is directly or indirectly
dependent on a doctrine of being.....all this can be elaborated
only in terms of man's being and universal being. There is no
answer in ethics without an explicit or implicit assertion
about the nature of being.[5]

Why is ontology necessary for ethics? Without it ethics would
degenerate into linguistic analysis, positivism, and naive pragmatism,
none of them having any foundation in the whole contextual life of
man. To fill in with more detail our picture of Tillich's thinking
on this matter, the following areas of relation between ontology and
ethics will be viewed: 1) decision, 2) motive, 3) criteria, 4)
courage, and 5) the definition of moral character. The brief state-
ments offered here are not intended to be definitive but only indic-
ative.

Decision. The most significant characterization of morality is
one which accounts for what Tillich calls the "venture and risk of
decision." In fact, every decision that a person makes, if it is
voluntary and intends to change reality in some way, is a moral one.
The ethical question then becomes "What is the basis for decision?"

H. D. Aiken, in Reason and Conduct,[6] illustrates one view of
the relation of ontology to ethics. In his analysis of the discourse
that accompanies decision, Aiken suggests that discourse may occur on
four levels: the expressive level, the level of moral rules, the
level of ethical principles, and finally, the post-ethical level.

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[5]Tillich, Love, Power and Justice, p. 72.

[6]H. D. Aiken, Reason and Conduct (New York: Knopf, 1962),
pp. 71ff.

This fourth level is the kind of discourse which asks, "Why should I
be moral at all?" and seeks the motive for morality. Aiken's use of
the term post-ethical would indicate that he considers it not a part
of the proper task of ethical inquiry. Indeed, within his system,
such is the case. But Aiken recognizes the validity of the question
as a human dilemma. Just because it is outside the field of his brand
of ethical theory does not rule it out as a significant question. But
whence the answer? Aiken points out that the "motive for playing the
'moral game'" may be given by an existentialist view which provides a
fundamental fact of the moral situation wherein no "reason" can make
a man fulfill his obligation but he will do it only by the "gratuitous
decision of the free man who is more than his commitments."[7]

Gratuitous decision? Unwarranted? Without a basis in reason
or reality? Aiken has indeed reached the end of his field of vision,
and being unwilling to venture into ontology agrees to let it go at
that. Why be moral? The question appears as irrational as "Why
should I do anything?" Aiken says it is beyond reason, being a
matter of existential decision. And it is precisely at this point,
argues Tillich throughout his various themes, that ontology bears upon
the discourse. Ontology answers the question about why one should do
anything by describing how one can be anything, and noting that being
and doing are inseparably related. Why be moral? The answer is in
the answer to the question "Why live?"

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[7]Ibid., p. 86

Actually there can be no such event as a gratuitous decision. Perhaps the term is meant to imply decision in a present, unthinking moment, shorn of all the trappings of theory and the agonizing of casuistry, the decision of one who has to face up to the fact that decision cannot be delayed longer, that the time is Now. Yet, even the present moment can never be pure decisiveness. Decision always occurs in a meaning-world; it is shaped by, and shapes, that meaning-world. It occurs in an ontic web of actual relationships and valuations, a moral environment. It is the task of ontology, as Tillich and others see it, to place the deciding one within his whole environment, the eternal Now (Tillich) or in the relation of compresence (H. R. Niebuhr) so that he will know what his human situation means and how his decision fits in to the whole fabric of life.

Motive. The search for the roots of the moral imperative in the structure and dynamics of being takes one beyond the delimited field of ethical inquiry of Aiken. Tillich, faced with the apparent reality of the moral demand in human experience, finds that he must seek it out and ask of that demand the seemingly audacious question: why? Thus, the question of motive is an area where ontology and ethics meet. Ethical theory may concern an analysis of moral language, definition of symbols, phenomenology or moral behavior, and practical application of rules and principles. But theory remains quite life-less, useless, and purposeless without accounting for the awareness and the power of motive.

Criteria. "Life is its own criteria." Thus Tillich sums up

the pragmatic derivation of ethical norms.[8] But where will pragmatic

theory get the critical principles which will enable it to judge what

is the most adequate behavior to facilitate life? For pragmatic

ethical norms are drawn out of human experience. That norm is applied

which seems adequate to the occasion. But what is adequate? As a

matter of fact, most pragmatists have at least an unconscious ontology,

says Tillich, to answer the question of criteria.[9]

Criteria are the content of moral philosophy. Aiken, though

eschewing a direct ontological basis for them, recognizes the function

of norms and principles as criteria for moral action. And Toulmin, by

use of a teleological principle, presumably asks the question "What

are the consequences?" and seeks to establish some principle of

justice.[10] Criteria are vital for ethical theory and moral action.

Ontology, by describing the principles of criticism as grounded in

the structures and dynamics of being gives to those principles an

authority and certainty which is wholly lacking in pragmatic ethics.

Tillich's complaint regarding early 19th Century value theory

and its contemporary adherents, is quite the opposite from his crit-

icism of pragmatism. Tillich notes that such value theories posit

values which seem to have a standing of their own apart from being

or nature. As Tillich says, these values were represented as having

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[8] Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago University Press, 1963), III, 28.

[9] Tillich, Love, Power and Justice, p. 75.

[10] Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

"the character of 'ought to be' but not of 'is'."[11]

The question of the criteria for value theory arises from its apparent relativity. "The establishment of values and their relation-ships," says Tillich, "presupposes a valuating subject, and the question arises: how can values that are relative to a valuating individual or group (e.g., pleasure values) be separated from values that are valid by their very nature regardless of personal or social attitudes."[12] Relative values, it seems to me, may be useful within closed societies, but have no standing in the more universal and heterogeneous world of today. Within this kind of world, are there any absolute values? Are their values that apply to everyone? If so, then the questions become self-evident and Tillich asks:

> If there are such "absolute values" (absolute in the sense of being independent of a valuating subject), what is the source of their absoluteness, how can they be discovered, how are they related to reality, and what is their ontolological standing? These questions lead unavoidably to a situation that the value theory by its very nature tries to avoid--namely, a doctrine of being, an ontology.[13]

Thus Tillich is ready to set aside deontological value theory as inadequate to the demands of a complete knowledge of values. He concludes his criticism with an affirmation of his own position:

> For values have reality only if they are rooted in reality. Their validity is an expression of their ontological foundation. Being precedes value, but value fulfills being. Therefore, the value theory, in its search for absolute values, is thrown back upon the ontological question of the source of values in being.[14]

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[11]Tillich, Love, Power and Justice, p. 73.

[12]Tillich, Morality and Beyond, pp. 25-26.

[13]Ibid., p. 25.   [14]Ibid., pp. 25-26.

It is at this point that Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr may be brought into fruitful dialogue. Within the limits of this study it may only be noted that in Niebuhr's focal essay, "The Center of Value," he strikes hard upon the same theme as we have in Tillich: the relation of being to value. Niebuhr, however, would never say with Tillich that "being precedes value, but value fulfills being." Rather, in the spirit of his social existentialism, he connects value with being-itself in a different way. By this I mean to say that Niebuhr argues that wherever being manifests itself in existence it always does so in relation to other being, and as good for or bad for other being. Being stands in a value relation with other being. "Value," writes Niebuhr, "is the good-for-ness of being for being in their reciprocity....."[15] Being, for Niebuhr, is always in relation. And being in relation with other being elicits valuation. Being and value are inseparable. Niebuhr refuses to ground value in essential being (in which direction Tillich seems to go) or in existential being or actual beings. Rather, value arises from the relation of being to being. By taking this viewpoint, Niebuhr grounds value theory in a new kind or variety of ontology which is not recognized by Tillich, and prepares the way for the criticism of values from the base of what Niebuhr calls a "theocentric value theory."[16]

Tillich, then, contends that ontology provides the ultimate

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[15] H. Richard Niebuhr, _Radical Monotheism and Western Culture_, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1960), p. 107.

[16] _Ibid._, p. 112.

criteria for the criticism of principles and values. These criteria derive their authority from the nature of being itself, from essence actualized in existence, from potential being as it becomes what it is capable of becoming.

Courage. Tillich's ontology of moral existence does not stop with a description of man's actual condition. Rather, he probes more deeply into human nature to ask "what can man be potentially, if he would?" In doing so, Tillich indicates the richness of human life, seeing it as both what it is and what it could become. The question, now, is "How do we get from one to the other?" The answer: moral decision. Then the next question is "What empowers us to carry out that decision when so many forces are at work to thwart it?" The answer for Tillich is summed up in the phrase, "courage to be."

Courage is that surge of power within a person which affirms not only his own being but reaches for his becoming. It is that awareness of potential fulfillment within a community of persons which enables him to make choices, to face risks, to accept his own guilt and the possibility of his own death, to affirm his own finitude, as he moves out beyond the limits of his own actual being for the sake of the being of others, and for the sake of his own potential being. As he finds himself thrust into existence in community, he finds that every decision he makes must be made in spite of the contingencies of personal and communal life. Courage, then, is not an extraordinary quality or power of being. It is common. Yet, of course, its strength and staying-power may vary in different individuals.

Courage manifests itself. It is, for Tillich, that quality of life which is the key to the whole ontological system. It joins morality and being; it is the witness to both. Courage is that aspect of man's moral existence which can be observed and, in a qualitative way, measured (though I don't recall Tillich mentioning this fact). Courage is available for study by the psychologist and the ethicist. It is for this reason that it can be said to be revelatory of being itself. For courage is the observable trait of human character which witnesses to what is hidden in the reality of man's being. The final pages of his book, The Courage To Be, give Tillich the occasion to define "The Courage to Be as the Key to Being-itself." Here Tillich notes that

> Every act of courage is a manifestation of the ground of being, however questionable the content of the act may be.....Not arguments but the courage to be reveals the true nature of being-itself. By affirming our being we participate in the self-affirmation of being-itself.....Courage has revealing power, the courage to be is the key to being-itself.[17]

Our aim here is not to analyze Tillich's usage of the term courage. Rather, it is to stress that here again a morally significant reality is joined to ontology and that they give meaning to each other. Why ontology? Because it depicts that source of the power of being to act decisively in spite of even total despair, while one has any power of being in him at all.

The portrait of moral character. Character education, in a

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[17]Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 181.

day when theologians join cynics in proclaiming the ambiguity of all
moral action, would appear hopeless. Many who become involved in
character education appear to engage only in a holding action, trying
to resist the pressures of all forms of so-called new morality while
conserving values which no longer seem relevant. Perhaps for that
reason it is important that Tillich, having developed a thorough
definition of the ambiguity of morality has also constructed a defini-
tion of moral potential for man. Tillich's symbol for unambiguous
moral personality is New Being. Such a person, as both saved and
saving, as accepted and accepting, is one who participates in New
Being. He is by that fact a new moral personality. By the courage
to be the person he is intended to be, he decides in favor of the
affirmation of being. He affirms life. Such a person, having turned
or redirected himself toward the fulfillment of all that it means to
be, in himself and in his universe, becomes that New Being by an act,
a primary act, a moral act. The personal symbol of the New Being is
the portrait or character sketch of the whole, fulfilled person. And
Jesus Christ as the original "bearer of the New Being in the totality
of his being...."[18] sits as the model for the sketch, while others who
participate in the New Being do so by conformity to Christ (Bonhoeffer)
or by participation in Christ, to use Tillich's phrase.[19]

Both theologian and layman ask "What is distinctive about a
Christian in terms of moral behavior?" The purpose of the question

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[18]Tillich, _Systematic Theology_, II, 121.

[19]Tillich, _Morality and Beyond_, p. 14.

is to test the seriousness of the Christian proclamation. And the
answer provided in Tillich's ontology, now reinterpreted as theonomy,
is two-fold. A Christian, with all men who affirm being and becoming
in themselves and their community, decides to act according to that
affirmation. In other words, he loves. His moral act is his own
personal response to the ultimate imperative to fulfill the potential
of life. In this part of the answer, then, it is insisted that the
Christian must be as fully human as all men of good will. Secondly,
as a Christian he is aware that he is grasped by that potential of
life, that power of being, in a personal way knowable only as confron-
tation by God in Jesus Christ. The Christian is self-consciously
aware of his acceptance by One who addresses him in demand and in
grace, and by One who is working in him as the power of being, as
Spiritual Presence.

Why ontology? Because through it the theologian is able to
construct the meaning-reality (or might we say "reconstruct") which
says "this is the kind of person you ought to be. This is the pattern
of life and the kind of decisions a person ought to display. Be like
this!" Such a model for character would not, presumably, be relative
to the groups in which one operates, but it would allow one to function
within those groups. Nor would it be relative to the circumstances of
one's birth, race, capabilities, strength of courage, and possible or
probable death. Such a model for character, in fact, being grounded
in what it means to be human, would allow a person to decide for him-
self, even in the worst of circumstances, what he will live for and
what he will die for.

II. THEONOMOUS MORALITY

Having summarized and illustrated some of the ways in which
ontology functions within ethical theory, we now turn to comment in
some detail, though briefly, upon Tillich's symbol of theonomous
morality. This is the kind of morality that ought to be, and that is
actual in a fragmentary way in the deeds of many people. It is
distinguished from heteronomous morality and from merely autonomous
morality. It takes seriously one's potential relation with all
reality and one's potential development into what many call an authen-
tic person. Part II of this commentary has two inter-related sections:
1) The general meaning of theonomy and its relation to morality, and
2) Tillich's focus on self-actualization as the aim of moral action.

The Meaning of Theonomy

Theonomy is a term with an all-embracing role in Tillich's
system. As a symbol it sums up his entire outlook upon life in the
Spirit. In order to penetrate its meaning we shall work back through
a series of statements, from the more general kind to the more
specific, and, in the popular expression, "put some meat on the bones"
of the symbol. We cannot be comprehensive, of course, within the scope
of this paper. Such a treatment was the purpose of Tillich's own
study, Morality and Beyond.

Theonomy, as it concerns morality, culture and religion, is
presented as the state of being under the impact of the Spiritual
Presence.

Presence is the symbol for the presentness, the manifestness, of the Spirit. It is the symbol for the "divine presence in creaturely life."[20] It implies nearness and separateness, withinness and externalness. It is personal relation which recognizes that relation does not destroy but enhances the power of being.

Spirit refers to the "actualization of power and meaning in unity."[21] This is a becoming of being which brings into fullness of reality all the potential of being for which one is capable. Spirit is the power of being at work in the ones to whom it is present, specifically in man.

Spiritual Presence, thus refers to the coming into actual fulfillment of the being and meaning of all reality. It is, in Tillichian language, the unambiguous unity of essential and existential being.

To be under the impact of the Spiritual Presence refers to the subjective experience of being in relation to the Spiritual Presence. It means being aware of the Spirit as Present, of being self-consciously aware of the actualizing of being and meaning, in all life and in oneself. This awareness, though expressed in psychological terms since it occurs through psychic functions, is not reducible to these terms. It is an awareness of the centered self, of the whole person.[22] Tillich says,

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[20] Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 107.

[21] Ibid., III, 111.   [22] Ibid., III, 25-28.

...because the dimension of the spirit is potentially present in the dimension of self-awareness, the dynamics of the psychological self can be the bearer of meaning in the personal self.....the dimension of the spirit actualizes itself within the dynamics of self-awareness and under its biological conditions.[23]

Of what is one aware, in particular? What is the <u>content</u> of that awareness? Everyone is aware of the reality in his environment. Beyond that, self-conscious awareness is the"awareness that I am aware." It is awareness of encounter with reality and of <u>what</u> <u>it</u> <u>means</u>. Man, then, is aware of the power of being and the meaning of being, not in abstraction but in the most concrete events of his life. The encountered environment of man provides not only the conditions of his existence, the necessities, but also a structure of meaning, a <u>meaning-world</u>. To have a world is to be in relation to reality seen as structured and dynamic in specific ways and to see oneself in that world.[24]

The primary meaning, for Tillich, of which one may become aware, is the movement of everything toward harmonious relation, or <u>transcedent</u> <u>unity</u>, toward the unambiguous reunion of essence and existence. Thus one is alert to much more than the immediate situation and the predicament of the moment. Within the entire web of relations in the present, past and possible future one senses that life moves toward its own fulfillment, its own completeness. This is the recognition of the power of all being to become what it is intended to become. To be aware of this movement, to be caught up in it, to sense its ultimacy as a happening, is to be <u>grasped</u> and <u>under</u> <u>the</u>

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[23]<u>Ibid</u>., III, 118.   [24]<u>Ibid</u>., III, 38.

impact of the Spiritual Presence.

To be aware and grasped is to respond. The passive mode of perception is transmuted immediately into the active mode of response. One becomes totally aware only through responding. The nature of that response may be referred to as faith, in that one responds to the fact of being under the impact of the presentness of actualizing forces (Spiritual Presence). It may be referred to as love in that one responds by receiving those actualizing forces within oneself (acceptance) and by participating in the work of actualizing in his relations with all others in his world. Faith appears to refer, in Tillich, to the actuality of the relation between human spirit and Divine Spirit, manifest as ultimate concern and evidenced as courage. Love refers to the movement of self into that relation with the Spirit, and through the Spirit into relation with others. Power refers to the dynamic of that relation, its strength and compulsiveness. Justice refers to the formal structure of that relation, and how all the elements of the relation fit together.

The content of the response, what the person actually does and the style by which he carries out his actions, is provided largely by his culture.[25] The sense of demand, of imperative, that he should so respond is provided by the ultimacy with which the power of being and meaning, of grace and love, address or grasp him in the presentness of the Spirit. Such a content (laws, norms, expectations, traditions, mores, family and national customs, and habitual personal style) is

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[25]Ibid., III, 95.

always conditional, contingent, ambiguous. No specific response, moreover, can be determined a priori before the moment for decision.

Any act which does not take into account the ultimate relation of a person to the individual and universal power of being and meaning is an act which is subject to external control. It will be response to extra-personal and anti-personal forces. The law of action, the pattern and norm, will be derived from awareness of what is strange to the self. The law of life for a man who is in this situation is heteronomy, and it moves toward the disintegration of the center of being.

An act of man which attempts to take seriously the unconditional demand to fulfill potential being, to love, does so by obedience to the expression of that ultimate demand in natural law and formal law, but is impotent. For such a man the law of life is autonomy, an inner law grounded in being, but it is without power. Who can live up to such a law? Such a man is tragic.

An act of man which attempts direct, radical obedience (Bultmann) to the power of being, to the demand to actualize being in the self in a community of persons, is a moral act. Though fragmentary and incomplete it is also unambiguous and fulfilling. Such a moral act contributes to the unity of essence and existence. It affirms one's own essential being. It is an act of love. The law of life for such a person is autonomy transmuted into theonomy. It is the inner law under the impact of the ultimacy of the power and meaning of being.

The relation of theonomy to morality is now obvious. The moral act is precisely that act which contributes to (or frustrates) the

actualization of being and meaning. Tillich summarizes the connection

in the following statement:

> The act in which man actualizes his essential centeredness is
> the moral act. Morality is the function of life by which the
> realm of the spirit comes into being. Morality is the constitutive
> function of the spirit. A moral act, therefore, is not an act in
> which some divine or human law is obeyed but an act in which life
> integrates itself in the dimension of the spirit, and this means
> as personality within a community. Morality is the function of
> life in which the centered self constitues itself as a person; it
> is the totality of those acts in which a potentially personal
> life process becomes an actual person.....[26]

Within this framework the principles of justice, power and love

have their roots, as seen in Tillich's ontology. _Justice_, often

considered as the proportional principle which gives to each person

his due, becomes the creative and enhancing principle by which each

person receives according to his need. _Power_, often seen as the

principle of compulsion, making justice work, and thereby divorced

from love, now becomes the principle of attraction or grace transform-

ing duty into joy, and command into voluntary obedience. Moreover, it

gives the courage to carry out the demands of love in spite of anxiety

and the counter forces which threaten annihilation. _Love_, often seen

as a separate principle apart from and greater than justice and power,

is now seen as the theonomous principle which makes justice creative

and power graceful, which judges justice and empowers power, to the

end of actualization of being.

Self-actualization as the Aim of Morality

A particularly revealing statement by Tillich in his book

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[26]_Ibid._, III, 38.

Morality and Beyond, contains the following summary of the relation

of the moral imperative to the actualization of being. It will

serve as a text for the comments that follow.

> The moral imperative is the command to become what one
> potentially is, a person within a community of persons....
> It is one and the same thing to have world, to transcend envi-
> ronment, and to speak in concepts and meaningful propositions.
> All this constitutes man's essential freedom and is the presuppo-
> sition of man's experience of the moral imperative.....The moral
> imperative is the demand to become actually what one is essen-
> tially and therefore potentially. It is the power of man's
> being, given to him by nature, which he shall actualize in time
> and space. His true being shall become his actual being--this
> is the moral imperative. And since his true being is the being
> of a person in a community of persons, the moral imperative has
> this content: to become a person. Every moral act is an act in
> which an individual self establishes itself as a person.[27]

Tillich's definition of the moral imperative in terms of self-

actualization calls for comment before dealing with the question of

its adequacy for Christian ethics. The characteristics and content

of this definition reveal several keys to Tillich's approach to

morality.

1.) The moral imperative is teleological in character. It

sees the moral demand not only as intrinsicly right but as right for

the sake of certain consequences. In his book Morality and Beyond

Tillich discusses the question of the moral aim, calling it "becoming

a person within a community of persons." Such a person is centered,

and is "the bearer of the spirit, its creativity, and its self-

transcendence." Tillich concludes "Insofar as it is the moral aim

to constitute and preserve the person with these potentialities, we

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[27]Tillich, Morality and Beyond, pp. 19-20.

can say that the moral imperative demands the actualization of man's created potentiality."[28]

2.) <u>The moral imperative derives from a radical definition of natural law</u>. Tillich's evaluation of natural law is strongly affirmative in that he sees it as a "positive and constructive criticism of the relativistic theories."[29] Yet, he rejects any static method of deducing laws and norms from the apparent working of nature, insisting that all such norms become immediately abstract and relative when applied to concrete moral situations. His radical approach leaps directly from the "power of man's being, given to him by nature," to the application of tentative norms in particular situations, always under the criteria of the principle of love, the moral imperative.

In criticism of so-called radical theologians, not named, who from emphasis upon man's total estrangement from essential being thus also are ready to reject natural law in favor of a new revelation, Tillich says, "Man's essential nature cannot be lost as long as man is man. It can be distorted in the process of actualization, but it cannot disappear."[30] The result is that in seeking the source of moral norms one must develop an anthropology grounded in nature, and see actual being as the gift of nature.

3.) <u>The moral imperative presupposes that man participates in a meaning-world as a free person</u>. Moral decision occurs within the flux of freedom and destiny, of individual intention and of a world

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[28]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 27-28.   [29]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 33.   [30]<u>Ibid</u>.

of structured conditions within which that intention must find fulfillment. An act is potentially moral if a person acts freely and if conditions permit him to act at all. An act can not be claimed as moral if it was done under constraint, nor can one be blamed for inaction if he is wholly frustrated by incapacity or overwhelming obstacles.

4.) The moral imperative recognizes that the actualization of selfhood depends upon the encounter of the person in a community of persons. Tillich does not portray the self-actualization of a person in isolation, or of one out of contact with the real world and responsibility. It can happen only as a person affirms the being of others, only as one from love seeks the unity of persons, only as one treats other persons as persons.

Tillich does not offer any specific moral content. There are no norms for behavior. Indeed, he does detail the place of law and norm within the whole scheme of morality, showing how they are used and misused. But his intention is to relate norms to the moral imperative, to give norms the authority and standing, as well as the power, of an adequate ontology. At any rate, Tillich's teleology, his radical natural law, his presuppositions regarding the nature and destiny of man, and his theory of self-actualization through encounter all contribute as keys to his symbol of theonomous morality.

Sacrifice. Perhaps at this point it would help to illustrate Tillich's approach to ethics by moving from consideration of the moral imperative to an area of moral decision. Our aim is to observe how

Tillich uses his theonomous morality as a general principle for criticism of specific alternative acts.

We can follow Tillich's lead by going to the psychological categories of self-integration: self-identity and self-alteration. For he uses this personal scene to discuss the moral decision of sacrifice. The general form of the question regards actualization of being. The concrete form "boils down" to a specific choice: "Shall I sacrifice this that I have for this that I could have?"[31]

The existential inescapability of this question is evident. A man is attempting to preserve the present self and become the potential self. Any decision will be a sacrifice of one for the sake of the other. For Tillich sacrifice is precisely the choice between the real and the possible. Choice means surrender of one for the other.[32]

Tillich notes that this sacrifice is usually described as "the struggle of values in a personal center," and suggests his own language as "the conflict of essences within an existing self."[33]

What will be the basis for choosing? What principle will apply? How can the decision be justified? To supply the answer Tillich suggests one criterion and applies it in three different ways.[34] And the situation is qualified to bring it within the realm of theonomous morality. Tillich's qualification is clear in his introductory phrases: "In so far as the personal center is established in relation to the universal center....." and "Where Spiritual Presence is

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[31]Tillich, _Systematic Theology_, III, 269. [32]_Ibid._, III, 42.

[33]_Ibid._, III, 43. [34]_Ibid._, III, 269-271.

effective....." Presumably, where a person is not acting from a stance in which he is self-consciously aware of the power of being and meaning in his own life and in the universe, he will not be using this criterion but rather be under the influence of the "strange law" which is heteronomy.

Therefore, under the impact of the Spiritual Presence the criterion applies. We will put it in question form.

Do the contents of finite reality show promise of expressing the essential being of the person? All the possibilities before me come as potential "contents" for my life. Shall I accept them, give myself to them as future for me, give them entrance into my center, my heart? If so, I will change, grow, become, be new. If not, I will strengthen my center, cohere, preserve what I am. If the potential new contents "show promise" I may be right in sacrificing something of my present condition to move in that direction.

With this general principle in mind, I may still be in a quandry. Therefore, all available resources are brought to bear on the problem. Tillich's symbol for resources is Wisdom.[35] In this case Wisdom is not merely the remembered and accumulated answers of the past, but also present insight and what is traditionally called general revelation. Thus, the context of my decision becomes as inclusive as my personal meaning-world and its cluster of values. Under the guidance of Wisdom and motivated by the power of being within me, I may creatively transcend my present self by choosing to

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[35]Ibid., III, 256.

become different or to change or to grow. Or, to the contrary, still under guidance, and still empowered, I may focus upon a stronger centering of my self while rejecting the new content or potentiality. Either way, the moral decision will be a choice for the fullest realization of human existence in myself and others.

How many contents of the encountered world can I take into the unity of my personal center without disrupting it? Or, to put the question somewhat differently: "How many directions can I go at once without flying apart?" The criterion again is the moral imperative. How many potentials can be realized, and how many directions one can go, can be decided in the light of the demand for self-actualization and love. Within every potential for new existence, within every new direction, there is the "direction toward the ultimate....."[36] The critical question for all potential and all direction is this: to what ultimate end will it lead? And will the end be ultimate in the full sense, or only apparently so? Will the new potential or the new direction be an expression of the demand of the imperative? Every potential and every direction has some possibility of fulfilling the criterion, otherwise it would not be a genuine alternative. But one or another, or a few will come with a demand that cries for obedience because it, more than others, springs from the very ground of my being, saying: you must do this because if you don't you will be denying the very meaning of what it means for you to be.

Not only how much can I do, but how much must I do, in order

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[36] Ibid., III, 270.

to realize my potential and still hang on to my true selfhood. How much must I sacrifice of my present being in order to be truly human? The closed personality is as much in danger of disintegration as the completely open one. The criterion is the same.

Perhaps the question may arise: how can one possibly make these kinds of decisions? Are there any other guidelines to the limits of what I am and what I must do? Tillich suggests two. First, remember that some potentialities can be "actualized only by the sum of all individuals."[37] For instance, the potential for true agape in a person and koinonia in a church can not be fully realized in one person until it is universally realized. It is fragmentarily possible but not fully possible. Tillich's insight here is a serious recognition of human finitude, and reminds us of our limits. Second, the external conditions of finitude are prohibitive. There are boundaries to my potential development, limits that are given. Finally I have to say, "This is it!" "This is all I can expect of me, of others; no more can be done; no more must be done." By the power of the Spiritual Presence, which comes not only as courage to be and become, but as courage to accept finitude, one is able to set the limits to what is required. Living within the possible world one can center on real life, and be released from the unhappy day-dream of merely potential existence.

Life in the Spirit, already indicated as affirmation of the power of being, hence acceptance of acceptance, now becomes the basis

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[37] Ibid.

for moral decision, for sacrifice. The choice is not compelled, nor outlined, nor given in absolute laws or norms. But it is made possible when one accepts his own limitations. Tillich says that the Spirit "can remove the ambiguous and tragic character of the sacrifice of life possibilities and restore the genuine meaning of sacrifice, namely, the acknowledgment of one's finitude."[38] In more devotional language we may say that having affirmed dependence upon the power and love of God we find that His power is at work in us to accomplish his will; we accept it, trust it, are loyal to it, and live in it.

H. R. Niebuhr has caught both the intimate and the immediate relation to God along with the depth of meaning concerning self-unity in the following passage from The Responsible Self, presented here as a summary of the meaning of self-actualization as the moral imperative.

> A unique reinterpretation of selfhood which occurs when a person trusts the power of his own being, is the discovery that when one is placed over against that power in relation, when one stands in in relation to the Transcedent One, the self becomes unified, centered, integral. How? By discovering that attachment by faith to the One gives freedom of action and interpretation among all the lesser relative realities. The inner self, usually torn apart by a multiplicity of feelings and ambiguous goals, now finds that trust in the One who has given the power of being, that faith in God, pulls all of the elements of personality into a pattern of wholeness and relatedness.[39]

Conclusion

Tillich's ontological theory for ethics relates to reality in

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[38]Ibid., III, 271.

[39]H. R. Niebuhr, The Responsible Self (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 122.

a way that many moralists do not. Tillich's ontology is not post-ethical but pre-ethical; it is directly concerned with lived life, and is not merely a theory about life and morality.

In addition, having driven by ontological method behind the popular meanings for God, and the word _God_, Tillich has served the hermeneutical function of bringing the Word of God to man so that he can recognize that word as moral demand. In doing so he has stripped man, as it were, of the security of thinking he can summarize the Word or Command of God as the words of _a_ God. He has thrust him out into the wilderness where all he can really do is look about him, trust God as the power of his being, and make his wild existential decision as best he can, Wisdom being his guide.

CHAPTER III

THE WORD OF GOD AND ETHICAL MEANINGS

In the previous chapter we considered the ultimate foundation for morality from a philosophical perspective. Now we turn to the same basic question from the view of biblical theology. The question of ontology will recede into the background, while the question of revelation takes its place. What is the relation between the Word of God and Christian ethical meanings? What is the relation between Gospel and law as given to man, and the faithful response of the Christian man?

This chapter takes a great deal for granted. For instance, there is very little direct treatment of the meaning of the Gospel, of the basic kerygma. Also, the nature of revelation as the self-disclosure of God to man is not defined. We are assuming that the root meanings of both realities are understood and can carry us through the discussion without any trouble.

In this chapter I intend to depart somewhat from a dialogical listening-responding stance in order to enter somewhat more sharply into debate with Dietrich von Oppen. If what results is something of a polemic, then it is because we see a need to go beyond the limits of the typical existentialist theology of the post-Bultmannians into the social dimensions so strongly emphasized by Buber, H. Richard Niebuhr and Tillich. The understanding of the Word of God as both Gospel and law, as freedom and order, will pave the way for meaningful contact with the needs of our contemporary communal existence.

Christian proclamation and teaching aim to bring persons to self-conscious awareness of the power and truth of the Gospel, so that they may respond with loving faith to the grace of God given in Jesus Christ and manifested in life as the Holy Spirit. In the service of this evangelistic ministry, the theology of hermeneutic seeks to set forth a theory of language which understands that man stands before God, and is interpreted by the word of God. Hermeneutic is a science of linguistics, of historical criticism, and of man, put to the service of theology and its doctrine of the word of God. Hermeneutic theory is built upon the fact that all human existence and self-understanding has linguistic character. Every significant event is language-event. Every experience becomes experience-with-meaning when it is shaped into and shaped by the symbols of language. Hermeneutic theory relies on the science of historical criticism to assist in the translation of language-event meanings from one time and culture to another. Together the language of events in history and the history of language-events are then related to the word-event realities of our modern age, so that the word of God spoken in other times and places may also speak in our time and place. Thus, by speaking to us, it may place us before the One who speaks the word, who questions us, who claims us, who loves us, who by His grace calls us from being to new being and new humanity.

In the introductory chapter of his book, Language, Hermeneutic, and the Word of God, Robert W. Funk indicates the task of the hermeneut by quoting the Pauline formulation about the minister who is "the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are per- ishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a

fragrance from life to life" (II Cor. 2:15f., RSV). In his remarks Funk concludes that "The Pauline formulation may well meet some resistance in the American tradition with its strong activist leanings. If so, it is because the relation between word and deed has not been properly understood. The word to be spoken is not mere word, but the word that creates, brings man from death to life or the word that condemns. By it men are lost, and by it men are saved. It is the word spoken in the name and therefore in the authority of God."[1]

This chapter seeks to proceed from an understanding of the relation of word and deed. In addition to setting forth within this discussion some expression of the doctrine of the word of God, we intend to apply some of the insights of this doctrine to a discussion of the relation of revelation to morality, of the word of God to law. It is believed that this can be done within the framework of the new doctrine of the word offered by hermeneutical theology, especially in the light of Ebeling's formula: "the hermeneutical principle is man as conscience."[2]

The dialogical character of this study indicates that the author has been in "conversation" with others, especially those theologians of the Bultmannian movement who are carrying the present hermeneutical program, and has attempted to record on paper some of

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[1] Robert W. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 13.

[2] Gerhard Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," in James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., The New Hermeneutic (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 110.

the fruit of the inner dialogue. This paper aims to illustrate the course of a listening-responding relation, proceeding through seven steps.

    I. Theological orientation from which the discussion proceeds.

    II. A brief caricature of the modern age.

    III. The open situation and the eschatological dimension.

    IV. The new "state of life": discussion of law and Gospel.

    V. Neighbor-love and the re-ordering of man's law before God.

    VI. Criteria for a "new order": the word of God as law.

    VII. Conclusion: affirmation of "Christian character" and the interpretation of Jesus Christ as moral paradigm.

It is not presumed that this study is absolutely rigorous. There are too many assumptions unexplained; the scope of concerns here forbid adequate definition of all concepts. But we do stand accountable for the right listening and hearing of others, and for the kinds of responses and questions which that listening has elicited. In the end the themes of this paper will be as open to question as at the beginning. But we may hope that in wrestling with these themes the word-event may have served to illuminate our struggle.

I. THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

Man's knowledge of God rests on his being known by God, his love of God on his being loved by God, his addressing God as God on his being addressed by God, his acceptance of God as God on his being accepted by God. Revelation certainly does not mean that some kind of additional, new, objects appear on my horizon and now become objects of my activity. Rather, revelation means the brightening, the illumination of the whole of my existence with everything it embraces. Revelation does not mean that something is handed to me which I must then take the trouble to clarify and

understand and relate to my reality. Rather, revelation is itself
light and therefore a source of light, not a single object offered
for consideration, not anything at all that seeks to be considered
in itself, as little as the source of light is there to be looked
into (which everyone knows blinds instead of illumining). Rather,
the source of light serves the illumination, and therefore the
knowledge, of the reality which concerns me in any case, so that
strictly I myself together with the reality which concerns me am
the object of revelation, the object on which revelation is
bestowed and which is therefore brought to light. Thus as passive
receiver I myself together with the reality which concerns me
belong of necessity to the event of revelation.

<div align="center">Gerhard Ebeling, <u>Word</u> <u>and</u> <u>Faith</u>, pp. 350-351</div>

A man receives word and world as gift. He receives word as the speech that brings him into existence as a spiritual being, as a person. He receives world as the milieu of experiences and meanings which shape and form word into concrete realities.

A man receives word as a happening of person with person in the world-context, as an event which communicates not information[3] but being, not abstract ideas but concrete relation, not morality but moral imperative, not words but word, not word about God but word of God.

A man receives world as the substance of his life, as the universe of thought-forms and the patterning of relations, as the hard actuality of existence centered about the power of being given in the word. Man receives world through language, as word-event.

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[3]But cf. Ernst Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem," in Robinson, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., especially pp. 138-139 where Fuchs discusses the "information" given in the New Testament.

Word and world, together, become word-event[4] when, in the meeting-ground of man's conscience,[5] they speak man into new actuality, reveal to him his own true nature--both as he is and as he is called to be--and set him to the task of making choices that fit his new humanity.

Receiving the word in the word-event is an act of faith. It is decisive willingness to stand before the word and listen to its question, as before One who by speaking brings man into relation, into manhood. Such a man gives assent to the speech of the One who brought into being all creation by his word, while he "stands surety with his own reality for the reality of God, with his own existence for the existence of God."[6] Such a man also assents to the speech of One who has placed him before his own potential existence, his own future, and he also grieves under questioning over his distrust and lack of confidence while remaining hopeful that the future will indeed bring into his present a power of being what will wholly overcome his own inertia.

What is faith? It is acquiescence[7] to the right of another to

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[4] Gerhard Ebeling, Word and Faith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 361, "...God and the world come together in the word-event..."

[5] Ibid., p. 356; cf. Chap. XVII, "Theological Reflexions on Conscience."

[6] Ibid., p. 346.

[7] Ibid., p. 350, and Gerhard Ebeling, The Nature of Faith (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 82-82, where Ebeling's term is "passivity."

place one on the witness-stand, and to ask for an accounting.[8] It is

readiness to hear,[9] with alertness, that word which summons to new

duties and to obedient action. Faith is concentratedness,[10] the whole

man centered upon the whole of reality. Faith is looking upon reality

with positive affirmation,[11] certain of genuine relation with it,[12]

and bent upon participation[13] in bringing about its future. Faith is

the result of encounter of man with man,[14] and man with Jesus in

concrete,[15] daily,[16] life. It is knowledge that the future holds the

promise of wholeness and salvation, indeed that the time has come.[17]

Word comes to the man of faith as revelation of the reality of

God, not as some special reality implying that God is another being in

addition to the world, history, and man, but as reality itself which

holds the world before the real. The word of God comes to hold all

words before the word. It comes as the impulse and message of love,

drawing the world into unity, men into co-humanity, and every being

into a relation of being for every other being.

The word and the world are given together. They are

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[8]Cf. Gerhard Ebeling, "Theology and the Evidentness of the Ethical," Journal for Theology and the Church, II (1965), 117 ff., the discussion of the compulsion to render account.

[9]Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p. 169.

[10]Ebeling, Word and Faith, p. 239.   [11]Ibid., p. 381.

[12]Ibid., p. 240.   [13]Ibid., pp. 240-242.   [14]Ibid., p. 243.

[15]Ibid., p. 244.   [16]Fuchs, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

[17]Ibid., pp. 125-130.

distinguished, yet remain in dialectical relation. This is the basis for the hermeneutical circle by which word and world are interpreted to man as they reveal each other. The word informs the world of its being, bringing the world into existence by its power of being. The world substantiates the word, gives it substance, reality. The word engenders, the world forms and solidifies. The word--as the good news in Jesus Christ--speaks love. The world--as law--shapes love into the actuality of life together. The word and the world, the Gospel of love and the law, are in symbiotic relation. To understand one is to understand the other.

A man receives his word and his world as given to him. However, they are not consistently well-received. The word, offered as joy, becomes sorrow, when it falls upon unheeding ears, when it is twisted or warped to serve the whims of man himself. Thinking that _he_ is the one _who_ _asks_ _questions_ _of_ _reality_--and thus of God--man lets the word fall into a patois of religiosity.[18] And the world, the gift of home for man, becomes not sacred (as dominion of God alone) nor secular (as dominion of man alone, a gift from God for his mature stewardship) but strangely secularistic, as if God really does not matter and the accounting of stewardship is really not pending. Is it any wonder that men of faith today have begun to turn to non-religious talk of God in order to find again the source of their faith? Is it any surprise that men of moral sensitivity have begun to set out on ventures into the

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[18]Rudolf Bultmann, "The Idea of God and Modern Man," Journal for Theology and the Church, II (1965), 87-89, on "religiosity."

"open situation" of moral decision, shorn of the guidelines and rules of once accepted Christendom, in order to respond to the summons they hear in the word of God?

It is precisely at this point, where man is caught between word and world, between venture and construction, between Gospel and law, that I wish to take up the discussion. In the mode already begun, in dialogue with the thought-world of Rudolf Bultmann, Gerhard Ebeling, Ernst Fuchs, Dietrich von Oppen, et al, I shall endeavor to spread before us some thoughts intended to illustrate the kind of thinking that may occur in the man whose conscience is the meeting-ground of the word-event and reality.

II. THE MODERN AGE

What is the actual moral situation today? A brief statement may place this discussion in reality. "Man come of age" has now become a common term in theological jargon. It signifies especially that man is called to live before God without God.[19] It also says that man is free from former bondage to law and for mature responsibility in man's world. It signifies humanity coming to its full potential. However, that freedom, that responsibility, that realized potential, are not actually real in our modern scene! "Man come of age" carries with it an eschatological dimension (to be discussed in a later section) often overlooked by many of the popularizers of

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[19]Bonhoeffer, Widerstand und Ergebung, p. 241, in Ebeling, Word and Faith, p. 154.

situation ethics. It has the character of "come", yes; but also it has the character of "not yet."

A factual picture of the modern scene would portray humanity in an advanced stage of childhood (to continue the use of the same figure of speech about maturity). He has not yet emerged into the time of adolescence, though he may be approaching it now. The great accomplishment of the modern age is technical skill. Yet the skilled hardly know what they are to do with their techniques. Western man is beginning to experience again the signs of a crisis of identity. He is not now aware of any compelling vocation, and is unable to rest securely within the historical continuum of past-present-future.

The present era is one of rebellion, shouting "I can do it," but there is little comprehension of what really needs doing and certainly no vision of the implications of success and failure. The result is man's production of monstrosities as institutions and tools, leading to the dehumanization of man himself.

This is a time of stammering communication. The chief uses of language for many people and supra-personal groups are those kinds of talk which force ideologies upon subjects, or which seduce men into selling their birthrights for ephemerae. Without a language that can speak man into maturity, man succombs to the outpouring of non-communication, believing that it means something, or hoping so.

The avant garde of modern emerging maturity, of man struggling to grow up, displays evidence of growing concern for the true meaning of human existence, of human sexuality, of identity and placement in the world, of awareness and answerability, of awesome wonder at the

great new powers that surge in man's being. This is the kind of
actual world, one of gross immaturity, into which the Word comes as
freedom _from_ law, _for_ a new kind of law, a kind of law engendered by
the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

III. THE OPEN SITUATION AND THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Modern man seeks to make the future his present. Both past and
future are foreshortened by stressing the immediacy of the present
decisive moment. "Man in the open situation" is attempting to break
sharply from child-like reliance upon past continuities and securities,
convinced that their hold on him is now unbearable bondage. He turns
instead to the future, working furiously to shape it and fashion it
according to his own plan and dream.

As a matter of fact, the future penetrates the present with
such power as, of itself, to overwhelm man's heritage and his
compresence (H. R. Niebuhr) with other persons in historical dimension.
The apparent meaningful dimension for modern man is _future_. Therefore,
when anyone considers the significance of the Gospel today, for man in
the open situation, he must show how it has significance for man's
future. Once the Gospel was the foundation upon which the ordered
communal structure was built and was the guide of individual behavior.
Now its function is, in the phrase of Dietrich von Oppen, to be the
"presupposition for the existence of the new, future-oriented, secular

'state of life.'"[20]

How do we receive our future, which comes with such relentless change, which impell us out of our present security structures into the unprotected openness of tomorrow's situation? The future approaches, rushes, toward us as crisis. Von Oppen says, "And pivotal is our relationship to the future, which, on the one hand, we await with secret fear, and on the other hand, we try to anticipate with bold planning."[21] The future comes to us as raw event, to be experienced, not yet with a word, not yet with an interpretation.[22] It appears that some shapers of the future, the modern makers of events and meaning, try to tell us beforehand what that word will be. Their ideological visions predict the "state of life" in future centuries. Not so! declares the Gospel. The future, in von Oppen's word, is not at man's disposal.[23] Who can predict the meaning of a wholly open and implausible existence? Who can look with confidence upon the future when the word-event of today may tomorrow cry out against us? And when man's hopeful constructions will surely be torn down as rubbish incapable of giving meaning to the then newer open situation?

Eschatological theology, elaborated by von Oppen, and in more

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[20]Dietrich von Oppen, "Man in the Open Situation," *Journal for Theology and the Church*, II (1965), 153.

[21]*Ibid.*, p. 152. [22]*Ibid.*, p. 155. [23]*Ibid.*, p. 153.

detail by Bultmann[24] and Ebeling[25] among others, aims to bring an interpretation of the future to modern man. The future, coming as foreboding and as promise, is proclaimed, interpreted, as the arrival of a new state of life empowered by the Gospel. Not only that, but this new state of life (covered by the catch-word "secular") finds its origins in the thrusts of the Gospel message to a law-bound humanity.[26]

Though it would be grossly presumptuous to describe that arrival in progressive language, still, "with each decade we are further removed from the old, holy 'orders'; the powers which bear their imprint may still live on, but they are slowly dying. Our direct dependence upon the power of the Gospel and upon the vitality of faith grows in the same measure. The theme of history - 'Ecce homo' - becomes ever clearer in the perplexing clamor which surrounds us."[27]

To be sure, concurrent with "vitality of faith" and entrance upon the new state of life, evil is increasingly shown up for what it is.[28] Evil reveals itself even in the wondrous events of the modern age, as apostasy, as the worship of such goals as peace, which may be called seduction. But in spite of all, and through it all, the victory of Christ is assured. That is, to put it in the non-religious language

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[24]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), II. "Faith as Eschatological Existence."

[25]Ebeling, Word and Faith, p. 240.

[26]Bultmann, "The Idea of God and Modern Man," p. 86.

[27]Oppen, op. cit., p. 156.   [28]Ibid. pp. 154-156.

comprehensible to unbelieving modern ears, the arrival of a truly co-human existence is certain! The future, not at our disposal, assuredly is ushering in the day of neighbor-love, of freedom from the law (conventions, rules, pre-formed notions of oughtness) and of the open situation in which one can live in radical obedience to the summons which speaks out of existence itself, and obedience which is uncluttered and unbound.

Faced with such a future, there is only one basic immoral act: failure. And, in the interpretive language of theology, the reason for the sin of failure is deficiency of faith, hope and love.[29] This deficiency is "separation from the source and postulate of our modern world,"[30] meaning, from God.

If we comprehend von Oppen's view, sin would be reliance upon law, or the closing of the situation by the formulation of the assumptions of the new "state of life" into any kind of valid pattern to guide human society. Sin would be the attempt to move toward the neighbor in love while fettered by the customs and prejudices of the past which determine "who is my neighbor" and define both the means and the limits of love. Sin would be the shaping of the future according to the preformed patterns of what it should be. It would be timidity about the future, "closing our eyes,"[31] and attempting to not-let-it-happen. On the other hand, righteousness is being free in the always open situation, forming life as it comes from the future according to.....what?

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[29]Ibid., pp. 156-157.   [30]Ibid., p. 157.   [31]Ibid., p. 157.

Our dialogue has brought us to ask about the actual shape of the new state of life. It would be unfair to accuse the post-Bultmannian school of advocating anarchism. They do express some notion of the formation of a new existence, of the shaping of some orderly life where law will function in a radically different way. Yet the form is very disconnected, the shape is purposely vague, the structure of law is flimsy. Perhaps there is justifiable concern that any "new order" which solidifies "new law" may become as demonic as the old and capture the confidence of men away from radical reliance upon God. After all, it has happened before! The new "state of life" could, under the influence of centripetal forces, seek to establish itself as a new "order of life," perhaps a new puritanism, obstructing anew the ever new demands of the Gospel.

Now, in order to reflect upon such a concern, we need to move into a discussion of law and Gospel. We will presume, in order to get at the heart of the ethical question, that the law and the Gospel proceed from the same word-event, and that they are, in function, both necessary.[32] We will also recognize that, as they stand in polar tension to each other, one without the other is dead. To express it affirmatively, to live by the Gospel is to live by the law; to live by the law is to live by the Gospel: while they are related.[33]

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[32] Ebeling, Word and Faith, pp. 143-144.

[33] Bonhoeffer, op. cit., pp. 112ff: "I don't think it is Christian to want to get to New Testament ways of living and thinking too soon and too directly...You cannot and must not speak the last word before the second last one. We live with the second last and believe in the last." Quoted in Ebeling, Word and Faith, pp. 147-148, n. 1.

IV. THE NEW "STATE OF LIFE": LAW AND GOSPEL

The problem for _modern_ man is not, as I see it, wholly summarized by the term _bondage to the law_ (_lex ipsa_, law in its totality, or law as such). Rather, the problem is that in this "technical-organizational" society there is no comprehension whatever of _law_, (_lex ipsa_). There is no autonomous law that commends itself to all people. Thus the rules of heteronomy force men to shift from one conventional code to another, depending on the social group with whom they are in relation at the moment. Without an accepted system of law, the individual who must shift moral gears several times each day soon invalidates, himself, the supposed ultimacy of any laws by means of a self-serving cynicism. The only law that counts is the law that serves personal and private ends, wherever one is. (Ayn Rand and the ethics of selfishness is a good example).

Admittedly there are many today who, from such personal reasons, adhere fanatically to conventions and traditions, as if they had universal validity. This attitude needs to be infected by the spirit of the Gospel, offering freedom from the law. But the opposite trend is just as dehumanizing. The cynical effort to undercut the laws, an effort with which proclaimers of the Gospel may at times join, must be re-routed (can we say converted?) into a reconstruction or reformation of new patterns of communal life grounded upon the

Gospel and shaped by the principles of a new law.[34]

A question needs to be put to von Oppen and others of the radical movement: is the call out of the old order which is given man in his heritage not also a call into a new order? Are "orders" as such so freighted with law (lex ipsa) as to forbid the rejuvenation work of the Gospel? Have not "orders" in the past served to "bring order" out of a moral chaos by bringing that chaos under the criterion of the Gospel in new and revitalizing ways? Are such "orders," as patterns of life with recognized authority, not often the means for the accomplishment of the ends of the Gospel in the human community? Or is the fulfillment of the Gospel conceived of only in terms of individual relation with God and not in terms of the complex web of interpersonal relation?

The proclamation for today is one which presents the fullest implications of the Gospel; it comes to us a liberating love and as an ordering love, as freedom and as destiny, as the grace of God and as justice under the rule of God. In a day of moral unawareness such as our own, the word comes as radical liberty from all the structures of law and custom that prevent us from seeing and heeding the moral imperative. It breaks down self-perpetuating orders and self-validating new organizations. And, in this day of heteronomous morality, when lack of moral perception and sensitivity result in blind allegiance to the moral fads of the moment, the word also comes as a radical

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[34]We cannot offer here an exposition of Ebeling's "Reflexions on the Doctrine of the Law," in his Word and Faith, pp. 247-281. We do assume his affirmation of law here and elsewhere as necessary for theology and ethics. Cf. pp. 275-276, the relation of revelation to law; and also p. 278, his designation of law as event as well as teaching.

re-ordering of life on the basis of what the new liberty is for: love,
manifested in ambiguous human society as justice. In the gift of word
to man in the world, in the gift of word-event happening in man's
conscience, the word comes as Gospel-law, as the power of life and the
structure of life.[35]

A long view of history (future historical dimension) suggests
that, in some large measure, there will be a new ordering of society,
there will be new "orders." In fact, the present movement toward open-
ness carries within it the criteria for order, otherwise it would only
be rebellion without a future; it would be anarchy. Every institution
in our society appears ripe for the re-orientation and re-ordering
message of the Gospel: for example, new conceptions of leisure, of
vocation, of work, of economic goals, of religion. To the degree that
there is any measure of success in the opening of all orders today to
the aggiornamento, there will be a settling of the people about the
new law making it foundational, basic, functional, traditional. A
radical openness cannot be maintained, though a radical critical atti-
tude, informed by the Gospel, can keep some balance between closure
and openness. And the Gospel itself, for the sake of the new humanity
it endeavors to set free, will help shape and define the new man.

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[35]Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p. 95; and his Word of Faith, p.
281, "For the sake of the Gospel the law must come to expression, if
the Gospel itself is not to be misunderstood as law." My point is not
to make the Gospel into law, but to recognize that "the concreteness
of the Gospel" becomes law as it becomes actual and shapes the
relations of men.

V. NEIGHBOR-LOVE: RE-ORDERING MAN'S LAW BEFORE GOD

The relation of law and Gospel, of order under the criterion of love, can be further illustrated by the discussion of neighbor-love. The hermeneutical circle can again be discerned, as reality and proclamation, world and word (or world-word-event and God-word-event) interpret one another.

Existential theology does _not_ interpret love of neighbor as valid <u>because it comes as command from God</u> through the Scriptures. Rather, it is the command in the Scriptures and comes as the divine command <u>because it is the necessity of human existence</u>. It is "an exact statement of things as they are given and demanded today," says von Oppen.[36] Neighbor-love is intensely person-confirming. It respects the "secret of the other,"[37] so that we "lovingly make room for him and do that which is necessary."[38] This is the kind of love demanded in day-by-day existence. It is the demand of reality. The word of demand from life _is_ the word of life given by God and witnessed to in the Scriptures; they confirm one another.

Von Oppen sees neighbor-love, instigated by the Gospel and by the demands of existence, as "in profound contrast to the former existence which was constituted in 'orders.'"[39] We agree, if one stresses the adjective "former." New love always breaks out of the old skins of habit and charitableness. It always "makes room for the

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[36] Oppen, _op_. _cit_., p. 148. [37] Ibid. [38] Ibid., p. 148.

[39] Ibid., p. 149.

other," in ways that disintegrate concepts of what to do (law). But, we ask, is the contrast still as "profound" when a new order, a new law, a new habit is considered? A person who, in neighbor-love, establishes bonds of relation with others in the community does thereby create a new order of existence. The order comes into being by the virtue of his life of love. The law of his life is brought into being by a succession of neighbor-love actions, by reflection on the meaning of these actions. As God is encountered by the "particular person who meets him," God's word as law is encountered as the structure of responsibility that now impinges upon those who meet.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan von Oppen sees the self-evidentness of the necessity of love. "Here no norms, no traditions, no principles of any kind are needed in order to know what should be done. The bleeding and helpless victim along the path is call and indication enough."[40] However, it would seem more appropriate to say that the "Call" cried for something to be done, something that would in deed speak the language of love, and did not specify what. It cried for love, but did not define a loving action. The claim of love is not specific. The radical demand, the moral imperative, is not concrete. As a matter of practical reality, the "helper" still has a number of decisions to make which all have ethical implications, which can "make or break" his effort to speak love to his neighbor. Every alternative overt act is limited in power and ambiguous in moral quality. In the light of the moral dilemma prompted by the demand of

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[40] Ibid., p. 150.

love, it can be maintained that the treatment given to the wounded

traveler by the Samaritan was precisely the kind of treatment that

anyone in his time would generally be expected to give when heeding

the call of love. He was following the rule of his day. The Samaritan

knew how to be loving! Such knowledge is not given in the moral imper-

ative, nor the Gospel as love, but is given in the laws which had come

to govern his life. And these laws were not private laws, but communal

laws, personally adopted and put to the service of another's need.

The consideration of law and Gospel forbids limiting the scope

of "love" to a one-to-one relation. It recognizes immediately the

suprapersonal dimension in which men live. So, we must ask von Oppen

and other "situation ethicists" if the situation can ever be either as

"open" or as limited as he suggests.[41] Are the limits of responsibil-

ity only determined by the immediate need of the loved one? Might not

the Samaritan have stopped at the police station to report the violence?

Might he, out of loving response, now transmuted into justice (the

formal aspect of love), have inquired into the need of improving pro-

tection along the travel route. Might he have put his influence as a

citizen, such as it was, into correcting an intolerable situation?

One of the serious failings of "open situation" ethics is its ready

acceptance of pre-mature limits on the scope of loving response. It

closes the way for the demand of love to find actuality by means of

fragmentary and inadequate structures of justice. It tends to keep

love a pure response without being clothed in the ambiguities of

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[41]Ibid., p. 151.

cohuman existence.

The demand for love, the radical claim in the present moment and place of relation, immediately upon taking shape as a specific, overt response, fashions a new order of relation, a structure of being for being that has its vectors spreading out into a multitude of directions and connections. This is the true situation, made open by its future-orientation, and its being shaken loose from the stranglehold of absolutism in law. Jesus' parable does not by any means suggest a limitation of responsibility, according to the loved one's needs. Considering the mood of that day, one is struck by the sense of limitlessness implied in the acts of care as well as by the fact that the Samaritan actually did care. Today, sensitivity about the nature of communal life and society suggests that the limit of love does not end when the needs of the one neighbor end, or that it is "meaningfully limited through the demands of the situation itself."[42] Love drives us into the larger sphere of responsibility, to wrestle with the problems that cry out for re-organization of powers and structures in society. If the situation today is to be really open, it must be open for the kind of social responsibility that goes beyond one individual or intimate relation to include all persons who are potentially threatened or stand in need. Need, as a demand for love, turns love into a principle for action, and turns actions or works into a pattern of loving behavior, into a law of response, into a new order.

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[42]Ibid.

The "situation ethic" gets "off the hook" of radical love much too easily when it narrows the ethic to individual relations and generally omits the follow through which radical obedience itself demands for the creation of justice in the social matrix of human existence. A Christian social policy, though it can never fully implement the demand of love in every instance, is yet commanded by the same word-event which demands a personal and lonely obedience to God in the encounter of a person with reality. Reality is a social reality, not a private one. A Christian ethic which shies away from the creation of new orders in communal life, for fear of losing its radical nature, is just as apostate as an ethic which is bound to irrelevant laws and refuses the freedom granted in the Gospel. Existential theology, following the radically singular categories of Heidegger, has elaborated a Gospel for the single man, pitted it against the law of the community, and proclaimed freedom from law as such while orienting men toward the future. But eschatological existence, always coming, will not in any measure become actual, always present, without freedom for the law, without freedom to continue restructuring rules and regulations according to a new understanding of what it means to live by faith in God through Jesus Christ, a new understanding of what law is for.

VI. CRITERIA: THE WORD OF GOD AS LAW

What shape might such a law take? The Scripture, which points us to "eschatological existence" also gives some detail about the

structure of the law of that existence.[43] The hermeneutical principles which relate word and world, faith and reality, also apply here. The linguisticality of existence is confirmed when it takes concrete form and pattern, when it becomes world. And the worldliness of existence is confirmed when the word-events reestablish world upon a new awareness of the realities which are its ground.

By means of a number of questions we can show the meaning of the relation of word and world as the revelation of the word of God as law. These questions are not necessarily progressive, but point to the kinds of criteria which may be considered as one thinks of the actual new "state of life" for man in the open situation.

Are the commands given with or implied in the command to love? Do the laws share in the ultimacy of the moral imperative itself, though in a limited way? That is, do they have authority? Is the authority of the law limited to historical and cultural conditions, or does it extend beyond these boundaries into new or different conditions? If the word of God is given so that man may know what time it is, in what time he lives,[44] do the laws specifically point to that time and guide actions in that time? If the word of God is a word of grace which overcomes sin and "deficiency," do the laws embody and provide for the exercise of grace among men? If the word-event points

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[43] Ebeling, Word and Faith, p. 279: "What makes its impotence into power is the fact that it (the law) determines the structure of human existence."

[44] Fuchs, op cit, pp. 127ff.

to its source in Jesus Christ, and calls all men to live before God as
caretakers of the world, do the commands tell what caretaker tasks
need to be performed in order to give concreteness to obedience? If
existence is linguistic, if word-event is the meeting of word and
world, faith and reality, in the conscience, does the law incorporate
in its own structure and self-understanding a means for constant review
and correction according to new interpretations of the demands of
reality?

Does the word-event happening seek for tasks to be done as work
and ministry in the world which speak and witness to the reality of the
happening, which enable the word-event to "make the scene."? Does
Gospel and law, as a total occurrence of power and justice, illumine
human life in its daily routine? Show it for what it is? Bring it
before God for accounting? Renew it? Restore it?

Do the commands tell "what to do" with enough specificity so
that no one can avoid them, yet with enough flexibility so that they
can be applied in a variety of situations? Do the commands remind one
of the Command? Does the radical demand or Command function as the
motive-force of the limited demands or commands. Does the Command
serve as judge not only of the moral deeds but also of the adequacy of
the commands in the laws themselves?

Freedom _for_ the law does not mean the creation of rules that
will substitute for existential decision and its risk. That awful risk
still remains! But freedom for the law presents another risk much like
the first. Freedom _from_ the law, radical obedience, risks _inappro-
priate_ action. Freedom _for_ the law, patterned obedience, risks

inadequate action. The first lacks specificity; the second lacks

power of fulfillment. The tension can not be overcome. But it can be

handled in a practical way by living with both freedoms, and bringing

the patterns of law under the criterion of ultimate imperative. The

demand, or we may say the will of God, requires that all law shall

always be subject to correction, and that the moral situation shall

always be considered open to a new interpretation of what is required.

At the same time, however, inasmuch as the laws do express the will of

God, they speak with an authority, not their own, which commands obe-

dience in daily affairs, whether routine or unique.

VII. CONCLUSION

When the word breaks upon man as Question,[45] and calls him to

lonely accountability, there can be no retreat into the haven of rules,

principles, and 'orders.' Either he stands before the Questioner as

one who has accepted responsibility for the well-being of man and the

world or he stands condemned.[46] Either he has been a witness to the

Word through his own mouth and deed, through the linguisticality of

his own existence, or he has denied it by inappropriate silence (at

times silence is appropriate) or rebellious actions.

What is responsibility? What does it mean to be accountable?

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[45]Ebeling, "Theology and the Evidentness of the Ethical," pp.
124ff. Also: his Word and Faith, pp. 347 ff.

[46]Ebeling, Word and Faith, p. 155. Also, the note number 3,
of Bonhoeffer's statement: "Who stands his ground?..."

What is stewardship for man, world and word? It is neighbor-love effective as justice in social relations. It is conservation and care for the gifts given to us and not at our disposal. It is the work of ministry, which proclaims the word as law and Gospel. It is faith at work, as Gerhard Ebeling has said:

> ...faith makes the world what it truly is, the creation of God. It rids the world of demons and myths, and lets it again be what God wills it to be. Because faith frees us from the world, it frees us for the world. Because it does not live on the world, it makes it possible for us to live for the world. Because it puts an end to the misuse of the world, it opens the way to the right use of the world. Because it breaks the domination of the world, it gives domination over it and responsibility for it. And because it drives out the liking and disliking of the world, it creates room for pure joy in the world.[47]

Stewardship, conservation, ministry--not single acts, but a lifetime of acting, a multitude of decisions, a routine of business which is the usual stuff of life. The new moral man carries not only one cup of water under the impulsion of a needy cry, but serves as cup-bearer for many. He visits not one prisoner, but is a prison-visitor. How may we say it? Faith engenders works, and faithfulness is works making a faithful man. A faithful man (not a morally correct man) is the definition of Christian character. Christian character is the full reply to the Question. Christian character is the risky pattering of action according to one's understanding of the demand of God seen in and through the demands of the moment, and shaped by rule and decree. It is formed both unconsciously and in full awareness, personally as a matter of decision and in common with the whole

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[47]Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p. 161.

Christian community as a matter of education. It is lived in wordly
society which is the Christian's only home, where he lives in but not
of the world.

Is it any wonder, then, that for the everyday variety of Chris-
tian and for a goodly number of the "saints," Jesus Christ has not only
been the "Christ of faith," but also the "Jesus of history"? And that
the fine points of the critical argument pass them by while they con-
centrate upon one who is both savior and man of heroic moral stature?
And that one of the hermeneutical tasks of our day is to interpret the
relation between word and world so that Jesus Christ as moral paradigm
may illuminate and speak to our modern man?[48]

There is no call for a simple identification of Jesus as only
a moral teacher. That day of interpretation is gone, having served
its purpose of liberating the kerygma from a smothering dogma. The
new hermeneutic is, I believe, going to find a means of understanding
which will let the truth of the Word of God come to us as the will
of God, and Jesus Christ the Savior come to us with the moral seri-
ousness which says, "Follow me,"[49] and breaks open the meaning of that
following as a well-ruled Christian life in the open situation.

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[48]Ebeling, Word and Faith, pp. 108-110, indicates that one of
Bonhoeffer's chief questions asked what Jesus Christ is for us today.
I'm suggesting that Jesus as moral hero is especially appropriate,
though this term is not comprehensive. The heroic nature of Christian
life is what enables it to speak!

[49]Ebeling, Word and Faith, p. 385, speaks of the "really good
works"...performed in following Jesus and representing him."

CHAPTER IV

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND ETHICS

A dialogical ministry of ethical meanings requires a theory of
human personality development. Dialogue occurs between persons. But
lest one confuse verbal "talking" with dialogue about meanings, one
needs to have a clear understanding of those psychosocial elements
which shape, direct and color the spoken words and influence meanings.
One needs to go into a dialogical ministry with some appreciation of
the kinds of ego strengths which each person brings with him, strengths
which greatly affect his conduct of the dialogue.

All of our "principal authors" have shown a deep understanding
of the nature of man. Tillich presents us with the New Being, one who
accepts his acceptance within the whole ontological frame of reference.
H. R. Niebuhr, in a similar way, presents us with a Moral Agent, one
who not only sees himself as placed in an affirmed relation with the
power of being Beyond the many relative powers, but sees himself as
answerable to that power, as responsible. Buber presents us with the
Single One, who though alone before the Thou, stands also with all
others in a community of relation and for all others before the Thou.
Erik H. Erikson, from his psychoanalytic view, presents us with a
developing personality, whose fully mature stage is that of Wisdom,
or integrity.

Our task now is to briefly survey Erikson's scheme of human
personality development, and relate this scheme to our question of
ethical meanings in dialogue. In order to proceed directly into

Erikson's discussion of the eight stages of development, we shall

assume a vast background in the history of ego psychology. Yet, it

may be wise to review Erikson's analytic theory as a preclude to our

main topic. In order to do so, we can make use of the summary prepared

by David Rapaport in his "Introduction" to the volume of Erikson's

selected papers on <u>Identity</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>Life</u> <u>Cycle</u>.[1] Rapaport's concern

is to "place" Erikson's theory in relation to that of Freud and H.

Hartmann. However, we need only to consider those points that specifi-

cally define Erikson's work. Therefore, seven points are paraphrased

quite simply below.

1.) Erikson's outline of human development relates a.) the

sequence of phases of psychosocial developments (interpersonal rela-

tionships) with b.) the roughly parellel sequence of phases of psy-

chosexual epigenesis, or libido development.

2.) This psycho-social psycho-sexual relationship goes beyond

the stage of full libido development, of genital maturity, covering the

entire life cycle. Thus it investigates later stages of adult life as

well as childhood and youth and early adult maturity.

3.) Each phase of this full life cycle is "characterized by a

<u>phase-specific</u> <u>developmental</u> <u>task</u> which must be solved in it." These

tasks will be the major topic for our later discussion of Erikson.

4.) The relation between the developing individual and his

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[1] David Rapaport, "Introduction," in Erik H. Erikson <u>Identity</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>Life</u> <u>Cycle</u> (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), pp. 14-16.

social environment is that of mutuality: the individual and the other

persons or structures in society respond to each other in need fulfill-

ing ways.

5.) Thus, society, which receives into its care the developing

individuals, "meets each phase of the development of its members by

institutions...specific to it, to ensure that the developing individual

will be viable in it." There is correlated to the stages of individual

development a series of socially structured responses geared to be

mutually beneficial.

6.) The individual's social development is explained by refer-

ence to "the genetically social character of the human individual in

the course of his encounters with the social environment at each phase

of his epigenesis." The result of the encounter is the parallel de-

velopment of a manner or style of solving the various necessary tasks.

7.) Erikson notes that the developmental tasks are solved by a

kind of shift from the primary organ modes of behavior in the indivi-

dual to a secondary functional autonomy in social modes of behavior.

Thus, what is at first self-focused behavior, through encounter with

caretakers and others becomes social other-focused behavior.

One further statement on Erikson's theory can help set the

scene for the discussion of the eight stages of human development. It

concerns the "epigenetic principle," a basic assumption upon which

Erikson builds his theory.[2] As Erikson gives it simple expression,

this principle is "that anything that grows has a ground plan, and

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[2]Erikson, op. cit., p. 52.

that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole." He continues, "...it is important to realize that in the sequence of his most personal experiences the healthy child, given a reasonable amount of guidance, can be trusted to obey inner laws of development, laws which create a succession of potentialities for significant interaction with those who tend him."[3] These inner laws of development continue right into the mature adult years.

Basic Virtues

With this theoretical background we can surmise that every person is working at the task of developing himself as a whole, single-minded self in relation with various others in his society. This is the great TASK given to him, from the point of view of personality theory. He is expected by his immediate community of significant persons to become "someone," as defined by that community. And, impelled by urges or inner developmental forces, he longs to become "someone." As the years go by, with new psychic energy being released by sexual maturity, with new physical power, with new mind power and imagination, the individual is ready to take on the task of shaping his own future within the world that surrounds him.

But the task is difficult and fraught with danger. Somewhere all along the way, each growing personality is hurt, warped, betrayed, burdened with guilt, uncared for and often uncaring. Many people are

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[3]Ibid.

deeply scarred by events in their lives over which they have had little control. Families torn apart by bitter quarrels, youth uprooted during crucial times in their lives, retired men left alone and unwanted: all manner of crises threaten the development of the fully integral person. As we reflect on the kinds of demands laid on persons today we may ask "where do they get what it takes to make the kinds of decisions required of them?"

Erikson, in his personality theory, has suggested an answer. He describes the development throughout life, in eight broad stages, of ego strengths or "virtues." Such virtues are by no means achieved moral qualities. They are not goals of sainthood to be reached by diligent, disciplined effort. Rather, the basic virtues are "certain human qualities of strength" inherent in an individual's own being and developed by the interplay of three different systems. Epigenesis is the development of the individual according to his own "ground plan." It includes psychosexual, physical, and cognitive development in roughly parallel relationship, in structural unity.[4] The growth of the ego, the second system, is the development of that "inner-psychic regulator which organizes experience and guards such organization both against the untimely impact of drives and the undue pressure of an overweening conscience."[5] But more than that, the ego becomes not only a regulator of inner life, but also an active planner of social

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[4]Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964), pp. 113, 135.

[5]Ibid., pp. 146-147.

life. The ego is "the guardian of meaningful experience," and the

guardian of "a sense of wholeness, a sense of centrality in time and

space, and a sense of freedom of choice."[6] The third system is that

of the sequence of generations, which refers to the "cogwheeling stages

of childhood and adulthood...a system of generation and regeneration."[7]

This is the system of need-satisfying person-to-person and person-to-

social institution relationships. This is the system of correspondence

between the developing individual and the social environment which

elicits his responses and shapes his style of life. This is the inter-

dependent system of individual-institutional growth. "From the stages

and virtues such individual dispositions as faith, judiciousness, moral

purpose, technical efficiency, ideological devotion, ethical respon-

sibility and detached sagacity flow into the life of institutions.

Without them, institutions wilt; but without the spirit of institutions

pervading the patterns of care, love, instruction and training, no

virtue could emerge from the sequence of generations."[8] The virtues,

then, "emerge" during the course of the interplay of these three sys-

tems, not as "external ornaments easily added or omitted according to

the fancies of esthetic or moral style," but as ego qualities or

strengths that are necessary for stage by stage growth.[9]

The first four ego strengths are rudimentary: Hope, Will,

Purpose, and Competence. The next is the adolescent strength:

Fidelity. This is followed by the virtues of adulthood: Love, Care

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[6]Ibid., p. 148.   [7]Ibid., p. 152.   [8]Ibid., pp. 155-156.

[9]Ibid., p. 135.

and Wisdom. These will each be defined in a brief sketch. Then we will turn to the implications of this theory for the ministry of ethical meanings.

Hope. The first major psychosocial crisis is birth and the maintainance of life. The virtue that emerges out of the successful coping of the individual with the task of living is that of Hope.[10] Erikson expresses the meaning of this psychosocial crisis of infancy in the polarity between trust and mistrust. The infant organism is, as a whole being, in contact with an All, out there. His mode of behavior is incorporative, first to get, then in response to the mother or maternal person, to give. The infant takes in the universe or cosmic order, and gives back to it from his undiffused wholeness. If his relationship with this immediate, life-giving, maternal being confirms him in his life the result is basic trust. If that relationship denies him, yet is sufficient for him to maintain physical existence, the result is basic mistrust. Every person, however, is ambivalent; trust and mistrust are both elements of every personality. A normal balance of these qualities tipped in favor of trust for the most part, is the virtue of Hope. Erikson offers this brief summary: "Hope is the enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence. Hope is the ontogenetic basis of faith, and is nourished by the adult faith which pervades patterns of care."[11]

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[10] Ibid., pp. 115-118. [11] Ibid., p. 118.

Will. The second psychosocial crisis is that of conflict, inter-
personal conflict between the infant and his parents, and intra-per-
sonal conflict within the dynamic structure of the psychosexual self.
The resolution of the conflict in such a way as to affirm the infant's
autonomous selfhood, while overcoming (to a large degree) any sense of
defeat with its attendant shame and compulsive self-doubt, allows the
emergence of the virtue of Will. The virtue of Will is the ability to
make judgments and decisions, to become the kind of moral agent
required by life in society. "Will," says Erikson, "is the unbroken
determination to exercise free choice as well as self-restraint, in
spite of the unavoidable experience of shame and doubt in infancy.
Will is the basis for the acceptance of law and necessity, and it is
rooted in the judiciousness of parents guided by the spirit of law."[12]

Purpose. The third psychosocial crisis to be weathered by the
child, in the nursery or pre-school years, results from exploration of
oneself and one's surroundings. Physical maturation permits locomotion
and contact with one's own body, and with others in the family circle.
Exploration, however, is usually limited, by factors of safety, of
custom, of adult ideals. The exploratory initiative is countered by
a limiting sense of guilt in the face of the limits set by others.
And the dynamic of initiative is turned into fantasy. Goal-seeking
behavior becomes purposefulness in the play-fantasy life of the child.
"Purpose...is the courage to envisage and pursue valued goals uninhib-

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[12]Ibid., p. 120.

ited by the defeat of infantile fantasies, by guilt and by the foiling fear of punishment."[13] Like the other ego strengths, the virtue of Purpose becomes evident toward the end of the appropriate stage of development.

Competence. The fourth stage is the series of rudimentary virtues takes the individual into the school years and the development of those skills which will enable him to contribute in later years to the technology of his society. The psychosocial crisis extends over a number of years, and may be expressed as the ascendence of a sense of industry and self-verification from work over a sense of inferiority and incapacity. This is the period of psychosexual latency, when attention is focused on learning the technological and social skills, on making things, and on making things together. "Competence, then, is the free exercise of dexterity and intelligence in the completion of tasks, unimpaired by infantile inferiority. It is the basis for co-operative participation in technologies and relies, in turn, on the logic of tools and skills."[14] Competence, acknowledged by others in the social group most important to the individual, is an ego strength of continuing importance through all remaining stages.

Fidelity. Adolescent psychologists are well aware of the crisis nature of the teen years. The adolescent moves, as it were, across a tremulous psychosocial bridge between the old self of child-hood and the new self of adulthood. During this time, to a greater or

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[13]Ibid., p. 122.   [14]Ibid., p. 124.

lesser extent, he is removed from both of these other "worlds" and shares with his peers in a distinctive "youth world." All four of the rudimentary virtues--Hope, Will, Purpose and Competence--continue to need confirmation and further strengthening through experience. And now, spurred on by a renewed surge of libidinal energy, youth anticipates the development of the adult qualities of Love, Care and Wisdom (integrity). For youth, all of the strengths have interdependent roles, some being predominant while others are yet hardly more than potential. The developmental task of adolescence is the establishment of a sense of identity, as opposed to a sense of having one's identity diffused and uncertain. The result of identity formation, the accomplishment of the "task" to a sufficient degree is the emergence of the virtue of Fidelity.

Erikson's view of identity formation refers to that sense of selfhood, of being "I" which comes to one from relation with others. A brief definition of the term is provided in his study, Identity and the Life Cycle: "The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one's selfsameness and continuity in time: and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity. What I propose to call ego identity concerns more than the mere fact of existence, as conveyed by personal identity; it is the ego quality of this existence."[15]

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[15]Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 23.

The heart of a youth's crisis is his dilemna over his "newly maturing sexual machinery which must be kept in abeyance in some of all of its functions while he prepares for his own place in the adult order."[16] In this kind of dilemna, a youth seeks those ideological views, those value systems to which he can give himself and which can give him a sense of inner coherence. The identity crisis, then, pre-cipitates the search for something of Fidelity. "Fidelity is the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems. It is the cornerstone of identity and receives inspiration from confirming ideologies and affirming companions."[17]

Love. The ego strength that emerges during the young adult years is love. And, is should be remembered, Erikson is convinced that love is not possible unless a strong sense of Fidelity is already a part of an individual's personal character. Psychoanalytic theory relates love to fully mature sexual development. It distinguishes now, more than in any previous stage, the masculine-feminine differences, resulting in a "polarization of the two sexes within a joint life-style."[18] Moreover, love is having received affirmation and care and readiness to give it. As Erikson says, "...love in the evolutionary and generational sense is ...the transformation of the love received throughout the preadolescent stage of life into the care given to

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[16]Erikson, Insight and Responsibility p. 124.

[17]Ibid., p. 125.   [18]Ibid., p. 129.

others during adult life."[19] It is "mutuality of devotion forever subduing the antagonisms inherent in divided function. It pervades the intimacy of individuals and is thus the basis of ethical concern." Love, as an ego strength, emerges from the mutual experience of intimacy, the sense of solidarity with another person.

Care. When Erikson seeks to apply his theory of personality development to the middle adult years, he moves far beyond the limits of most of the earlier psychoanalysis. As he sees the actual psychosocial situation however, it ties in directly with the mature adult generative activity: procreation and the care of families, and creation and the care of "works." The crisis now becomes "the need to be needed, the need to transmit, to teach."[20] Fidelity and Love, joined to enough Competence to make it effective, in the face of this new kind of crisis result in the emergence of a deeply abiding sense of Care. That Care leads the adult into those acts which will assure others of the basic virtues of Hope, Will, Purpose and Competence. This is the adult caring task. This is the adult ministry. Without Care, an adult degenerates into a self-absorbed individual, discontent with his role in the community and anxious about his own self-worth. With Care, he becomes one who is confirmed and thus truly healthy. "As adult man needs to be needed, so--for the strength of his ego and for that of his community--he requires the challenge emanating from what he has generated and from what now must be 'brought up,' guarded,

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[19]Ibid., pp. 127-128.   [20]Ibid., pp. 130-132.

preserved--and eventually transcended."[21]

Wisdom. Many men and women, it is true, have experienced life with such sensitivity to human values and relationships that they early become integrated persons. Yet, it would probably be agreed that only in older persons would ego integrity bear the fruit of Wisdom. One who has not only taken care of people and things, but has unified into his whole being all of the virtues here described and has learned now to look at his own life and the problems of others with a certain detachment, is one who is strong in Wisdom. The psychosocial crisis of the "mature years" orients a person to the "closure" of life, to the conclusion or drawing together in summary patterns of what life means. "Wisdom," says Erikson, "is detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself. It maintains and conveys the integrity of experience, in spite of the decline of bodily and mental functions."[22] The strength of Wisdom enables one to continue, while energies last, all of the functions of Fidelity, Love and Care. It sets as its task the communication of values and truths, as seen by the mature, to the younger generation, not with the expectation that these insights will be adopted wholesale, but with the knowledge that only by the vital interaction of the generations can the younger ones achieve their own identity and give their own fidelity. Erikson has seen the vision of what Wisdom in old age can mean:

> Potency, performance, and adaptability decline; but if vigor
> of mind combines with the gift of responsible renunciation, some

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[21]Ibid., p. 132.   [22]Ibid., p. 133.

old people can envisage human problems in their entirety...and
can represent to the coming generation a living example of the
"closure" of a style of life. Only such integrity can balance
the despair of the knowledge that a limited life is coming to a
conscious conclusion, only such wholeness can transcend the petty
disgust of feeling finished and passed by, and the despair of
facing the period of relative helplessness which marks the end
as it marked the beginning.[23]

Ethical Meanings and Psychosocial Stages

In the summary statements on the eight stages of man we have
already encountered some of the implications of Erikson's theory of
personality for ethics. In order to make more explicit the relation-
ship we shall offer here a series of reflections on "ethical meanings"
and tasks, as suggested by our review of Erikson's study of man.

1.) In the light of the principle of epigenetic development,
we recognize that inherent in each person, in each stage, are elements
of personality which are motivating behavior. The self as moral agent
is often quite unaware of the inner-directing power of the ego, a
power that is not always under the control of rational processes.
Dialogical teaching, as distinct from instruction, at least allows for
the nonrational processes to be revealed, so that the "whole person"
may learn.

2.) One method of ethical inquiry which has often been found
helpful is that which looks at the whole spectrum of one's life:
"what have I been and what am I becoming?" Our suggestion is that any
dialogue on ethical meanings must take into consideration the question

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[23]_Ibid._, pp. 133-134.

"what do I mean?" Therapeutic "uncovering," acting-out the past in present situations, entering new reality relations with persons who are confirming, may all contribute to new understanding of one's self and one's ethical values. Moreover, looking to the future, one may begin to anticipate what is to come. One may engage in a limited trial of those ego strengths which are inherent in every person yet undeveloped. Fruitful dialogue may center on the person one is becoming, not merely in terms of character traits or adherence to approved ideologies, but more basically in terms of the coming stages of life: "What does it mean to go to school and learn?" "What is so important about a twelfth birthday?" "Can a person love without being loyal?" "How does a person prepare for marriage?...for a specific job?...for retirement?" "What does 'being old' mean to you?" The significant point here is that at each stage of his development a person needs to have a positive attitude toward what he has been and toward what he will be. Or, at least he needs to accept himself in all dimensions of his existence: past, present and future.

3.) Ethical meanings, those understandings about life and how it is lived in relation, become seriously threatened during the beginning of the several transitions from one major stage to another. The development of a new strength, sets one into a new "situation", or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it sets the self as a "new person" into a new dimension of his environment. Old ethical meanings will not fit any longer. Therefore as the developing person seeks to reestablish his identity and redefine in his own mind those

who are most significant to him, he is also engaged in reflection on the nature of appropriate responses, actions that will speak to others of his own authentic nature and also fit in with his new, expanding view of his world. Our suggestion is, then, to acknowledge that each stage of development may have a "type" or "style" of ethics that is most appropriate to it. For instance, infancy is a time of whole-relation, of self-being with other-being. The only style of response in the basic-trust vs. basic-mistrust polarity is a pure relational response. As the child moves into the conflict of will in the autonomy vs. shame and doubt polarity, the relational response is augmented by internalized prescriptive or imperative modes. What fits is what he is told: "do, or don't." The prescriptive ethical style is one that becomes operative throughout life, but has its most appropriate relevance for young children, in stage I, II, and III.

A school child is still controlled by the law and rules, forms of a prescriptive ethical style, while in basic respects the virtue of Hope will continue to guide his selection of ultimately important acts. Thus, it will determine, in the face of necessary choice, whose laws and rules will be obeyed. The early relational system is still basic. In school, however, with the opportunity to bring reason onto the ethical scene, another style is introduced: deliberation. At first it asks "what does the law say?" As the child's cognitive ability increases the form of the question changes to "what should the law say?" Thus, the child becomes not only a lawyer but a legislator. Arising during stage IV in correlation with the emergence of Competence, the deliberative style continues to serve many useful purposes.

In fact, in connection with the development of Fidelity, a youth needs to become a self-disciplined legislator. He not only obeys the laws of the community; he makes decisions about what is the fitting thing to do. A progressive educational theory, and a home that stresses freedom for its youth, move away from the prescriptive style to the deliberative style, and stress that the young adult must now make up his own mind.

During the adult years all three ethical styles have their place, in the decision-making process of every person. Yet, it is our suggestion that the relational style is most appropriate again. The loving, caring adult, living in a world of great complexity, searches again for those relationships which give meaning to his life, and seeks to formulate mental images and personal habits of response within these relationships. He now knows that laws often do not fit the needs of the moment. He knows that general principles can not always be construed to suit the ethical demands that face him. He is often thrown back to the consideration of ultimate relationships and must spin out his responses in the light of what is ultimately important to him, often regardless of laws and principles. The correlation of ethical styles to the stages of life is a compelling reason for an ethical theory which allows for the operation of the style which is appropriate to the stage as well as to the particular situation.

4.) The ego and the ethos, being in complementary relation, contribute to each other. As the ego develops, the thos changes. But it is also very true, and is vital to Erikson's theory, that the ethos

of the community shapes the life-style of the developing ego. And this

ethos is not transmitted by "words" so much as by what happens in the

relation of child with significant adults or peers. Erikson points the

direction for inquiry:

> The subtler methods by which children are induced to accept
> historical or actual people as prototypes of good and evil have
> hardly been studied. Minute displays of emotion such as affection,
> pride, anger, guilt, anxiety, sexual tension (rather than the words
> used, the meanings intended, or the philosophy implied) transmit
> to the human child the outlines of what really counts in his world,
> i.e., the variables of his group's space-time and the perspectives
> of its life plan.[24]

The group identity informs the developing ego identity about "who he

is." And the ego identity informs the group identity about its poten-

tial development in the light of community needs. Ego synthesis and

social organization are necessary for one another.[25] This might sug-

gest that an area of meaningful dialogue might be "how the group

changes me" and "how I change the group".

5.) The dialogue of the generations is not only desirable, but

imperative, in the light of the influence they really do have on one

another. Too often parents and other adults engage in monologue with

youth. But youth have important insight to contribute, not only for

society in general, but for those particularly significant adults in

their lives. Erikson expressed this side of the mutual relation:

> ...in youth the tables of childhood dependence begin slowly
> to turn: no longer is it merely for the old to teach the young
> the meaning of life, whether individual or collective. It is the

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[24] Erikson, _Identity and the Life Cycle_, pp. 27-28.

[25] _Ibid._, p. 23.

young who, by their responses and action, tell the old whether life
as represented by the old and as presented to the young has mean-
ing; and it is the young who carry in them the power to confirm
those who confirm them and, joining the issues, to renew and to
regenerate, or to reform and to rebel.[26]

The youth-adult dialogue has great importance today because its very
absence has helped to firm up the boundaries between "youth culture"
and "adult culture." And the absence of dialogue, in which each side
stands apart in its own strength and yet stands with the other in
mutual communication, impoverishes youth as well. The crisis of iden-
tity in youth requires confrontation. Bruno Bettelheim, educational
psychologist, quotes a delinquent youth: "You can't live, if there's
nothing to push against."[27] Bettelheim concludes that the encounter
relation between the generations is essential for the maturing of
youth. And Reuel Denny, co-author with Riesman and Glazer of The
Lonely Crowd, agrees: "It is the very absence of the drama of confron-
tation with the adult that troubles many modern adolescents, more than
its presence would."[28]

As crucial as the youth-adult dialogue is, one must keep also
in mind that there are other stages of life where deep rifts separate
persons in them. Young married people have a difficult time really
communicating with those who have families and many burdens. And

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[26]Erik H. Erikson, "Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," in his
Youth: Change and Challenge (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 20.

[27]Bruno Bettelheim, "The Problem of Generations," in Ibid.,
pp. 77-78.

[28]Reuel Denney, "American Youth Today," in Ibid., p. 141.

surely the men and women who are entering the final stage of life find it increasingly hard to bridge the gap between themselves and the younger generation still deeply immersed in the ministry of Care. Dialogue between persons in different stages of life enriches all involved.

6.) The progression of an individual from one stage to another contributes to him a keen sense of historical perspective. One becomes particularly, or poiganatly, aware of it during adolescent years. Erikson calls this "a sense of the irreversibility of significant events and an often urgent need to understand fully and quickly what kind of happenings in reality and in thought determine others, and why?"[29] What is true for youth in this respect is also true for adults. Any suggestion that the past determines the future can be devastating. Any suggestion that, in spite of the past, the present action may change the course of the future, and that the future comes with its own promises for meaningful existence, can be life-giving. Rejection of the past, and what it has meant, may result in what Erikson calls "historical estrangement." One who follows this trend, so common today among youth, "denies (his) own vital need to develop and cultivate a historical consciousness--and conscience."[30] The dialogical teaching of ethical meanings can bear much fruit if it adds content to the whole historical dimension: past, present and

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[29]Erikson, "Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," p. 12.

[30]Ibid., p. 20.

future. In doing so it will fulfill the need of each generation to "place" itself in history and the stream of social life and contribute to a more adequate sense of personal identity.

CHAPTER V

RELATIONAL ETHICS

Among all the principle ethical styles common to modern man, relational ethics is at once most modern and most ancient. It is modern because it has some of its roots in existentialist philosophy and in contemporary thrusts of self or ego psychology. It is ancient because it has other roots in both the dawning and flowering of Hebrew and Stoic ethics. But relational ethics has more than modernity or age to commend it. For this "new" ethical theory provides a fresh understanding of the self as a moral being. It takes seriously the dialogical nature of man. It places man in relation to nature, society, and God in such a way as to provide not only demands or laws, not only aims or goals, but also and more basically a sense of personal responsibility for the world in which he lives. Relational ethics sees man as _moral_ _agent_ in a world given to him, in a world to which he himself is given. H. Richard Niebuhr, by listening dialogically to non-Christian philosophers of moral values, and by listening dialogically to Christian teachers of theology through the ages, has presented to the community at-large a Christian moral philosophy which says not only what it means to be a moral person but also what it means for a Christian to be moral if he is to fulfill the intent of God. Therefore, our discussion of the relational theory of ethics given by H. Richard Niebuhr will lay a valuable foundation for our later concern about the ministry of ethical meanings.

While setting the stage for the unfolding of his moral philosophy in The Responsible Self, H. Richard Niebuhr notes that his task is not to study the use of the word "responsibility" nor to analyze the intentions of its users. Thus he distinguishes himself from those who see "ethics" as language analysis and intuitional probing, in order to engage immediately in the function of ethical inquiry. He puts aside so-called objective and subjective value theories in favor of a more important task, the furthering of the purpose of ethics. In Niebuhr's view, ethics is for something. Ethical meanings have no value in themselves but are for the purposes of providing self-knowledge and moral guidance. "Our task is to try with the aid of this symbol responsibility to further the purpose of ethics: to obey the ancient and perennial commandment, 'Gnothi seauton,' 'Know thyself'; and to seek guidance for our activity as we decide, choose, commit ourselves, and otherwise bear the burden of our necessary freedom."[1]

Niebuhr firmly places his work in proper relation to human existence under God. Thus, we see that ethics is reflection upon life aimed at increasing the effectiveness of inter-personal relationships. We shall be noting further that the self-understanding sought will impress upon persons that they are response-able beings (putting the stress on Niebuhr's meaning of the word) in a

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[1]H. Richard Niebuhr, The Responsible Self, (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 48.

complex, multi-dimensional world. Ethics is _for_ man, and should

enable man to be _for_ others.

Niebuhr calls such an ethic _relational_ because it arises

from man's relationships and serves man's continuing life of

relation. In this review of H. R. Niebuhr's relational ethics,

the intention is to reflect upon his understanding of the nature

of Christian moral experience, directing attention to the following

themes:

    I. Stance: Radical Monotheism

    II. The Moral Act: Pattern of Response

Within the limited scope of this study the aim is to explore the

ways in which Niebuhr characterizes the responsible Christian as

well as to define the fundamental nature of responsibility in

every person's moral experience.

I. STANCE

The primary relation of man is relation to God. It is

Niebuhr's position that such a relation can not be tentative

or ambiguous; it is radical. It is a relation established by

God himself, in fulfillment of his purpose as Creator, Governor

and Redeemer. A person who confidently and loyally acknowledges

the relation, who affirms God as _his_ God, puts down all seem-

ingly ultimate claims of other values and with radical faithful-

ness affirms God as the only God. Thus, concludes Niebuhr, God

himself is the center of value, for he is the one who gives value

to everything else that exists.[2]

Radical monotheism will not allow any view with God as one among many values, and its resultant relativistic ethics. Rather, radical monotheism and its value center refers "to One beyond the many, whence all the many derive their being, and by participation in which they exist."[3]

> It is reliance on the source of all being for the significance of the self and of all that exists. It is that assurance that because I am, I am valued, and because you are, you are beloved, and because whatever is has being, therefore it is worthy of love. It is the confidence that whatever is, is good, because it exists as one thing among the many which all have their origin and their being in the One--the principle of being which is also the principle of value. In him we live and move and have our being not only as existent but as worthy of existence and worthy in existence.[4]

Niebuhr identifies God as Being and God as center of value, insisting that no value has ontological or essential reality apart from relation to the One who is power of being and the origin of value.

Niebuhr's stance is, therefore, radically grounded in faith in God. He declares it without equivocation: "Radical monotheism dethrones all obsolutes short of the principle of being itself. At the same time it reverences every relative existent. Its two great mottoes are: 'I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me,' and 'Whatever is, is

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[2]H. Richard Niebuhr, Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1943-1960), p. 32.

[3]Ibid.   [4]Ibid.

good.'"[5] To discover what is the basis for Niebuhr's stance, in

terms relevant to ethical theory, it is necessary to consider briefly

his _relational_ _theory_ _of_ _value_ and his view of _God_ _as_ _personal_ _being_.

The result is a distinctively Christian ethic.

Relational Value Theory.

In his essay on "The Center of Value" Niebuhr constructs with

philosophical precision a theory which carefully moves from the

definition of the notion of value itself to its function within rela-

tionships of persons, to the necessity of value centers in all systems,

to the value center of radical monotheism, under which all other

values are seen as relative.

Values arise from confrontation. One being that confronts

another existence limits it, or perhaps complements it. Both a

boundary and a relation are established. The result is that imme-

diately upon confrontation with another, valuation begins. Out of

the delicate or crude meanings of the relation, good or evil are

present.[6]

The confrontation of beings results not only in reciprocity

of actions but also in the _becoming_ of selfhood. Thus, all values

have _good-for-ness_. They are judged to be valuable inasmuch as they

help one "in its realization of its potentialities."[7] Then, to

become such a "realized" self is also a value, a good, not indeed,

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[5]_Ibid._, p. 37   [6]_Ibid._, p. 103   [7]_Ibid._, p. 104

for the sake of the person, but for the sake of the whole community. The good person is good _for_ _others_. Relational value theory recognizes self-realization as good, but "first of all for others selves, or other beings, and only by indirection as good-for-self..... In this situation every good is an end and every good a means."[8]

Value does not arise from simple one-to-one confrontation. The world of relationships is much too complex. The web of confrontations reaches out in all directions, linking a person in a world of meaning. Out of the multi-dimensional relations of beings, value arises. Such value can be seen as universal, not because it is essentially or inherently good, but because in the relations of persons it is good for them, and enables them to be good for others. Such a relation, where beings are good for each other, is "right." In such a relation, where people owe to one another the power of being, value is expressed as "ought." In such a relation, where persons are bound in communication, they owe one another "truth." Value arises from the relation of being with being.[9]

By what criterion does one determine what is actually right and just and true? Only by centering on one value as absolute, and judging the others in its light. All ethical systems posit a center of values, an absolute criterion. Various candidates are: the individual man and what is good for him; society and what is good for it; life and what is good for its preservation. One might say that all

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[8]_Ibid_., p. 105   [9]_Ibid_., p. 107

value theories are religious, in the sense that Paul Tillich means

when he writes of ultimate concern.[10]

As distinct from humanistic and vitalistic centers of value,

the starting point for the relational value theory is God, "the

transcedent One for whom alone there is an ultimate good and for

whom, as the source and end of all things, whatever is, is good."[11]

With this faith as its focus relational theory may then review all

values and judge them according to their service, their good-for-

ness, in bringing persons to their full potentiality as sons of

God.[12] For Niebuhr, relativism does not mean the absence of an

absolute; rather, it means an ultimate relation with the absolute

which enables one to judge and live with all of the relativities one

finds about him. The relation of faith with the Absolute, "as known

in and through Christ," brings judgment upon the rightness of rela-

tions and the appropriateness of decisions.[13]

God As Personal Being.

> ...if the cornerstone of Christian philosophy is the convic-
> tion that 'there is but one God and this God is Being,' the
> cornerstone of Christian as of Jewish and all radical monotheist
> confidence and loyalty is that the one God who is Being is an
> 'I,' or like an 'I,' who is faithful as only selves are
> faithful.[14]

God, the center of value, is the Personal One to whom man is

related through faith. Witness the life of the community of ancient

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[10]Ibid., pp. 110-111.   [11]Ibid., p. 112.   [12]Ibid.

[13]H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper
and Bros., 1951), p. 239.

[14]Niebuhr, Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, p. 45.

Israel. Out of the personal awareness of relation with God all human relations took on the character of similar covenant relations. Niebuhr, with Martin Buber and others, notes that promise-making, promise-keeping, and promise-breaking was the characteristic mode of life. God was at the center of their life.[15]

And from among the people of Israel came one who was radical in his faith, Jesus Christ. H. Richard Niebuhr points to Jesus as one whose "confidence and ... fidelity are those of a son of God--the most descriptive term which Christians apply to him as they contemplate the faith of their Lord."[16] Niebuhr's picture of Jesus illustrates his view of the meaning of radical faith: "The word of God as God's oath of fidelity became flesh in him in the sense that he was a man who single-mindedly accepted the assurance that the Lord of heaven and earth was wholly faithful to him and to all creatures, and who in response gave wholehearted loyalty to the realm of being.[17]

In Jesus one clearly sees the meaning of "being good," and "being good for others." When Niebuhr describes the virtues of Jesus, those of love, hope and obedience, he insists that both aspects of value be emphasized. He stresses that love, hope and obedience were not Jesus' centers of value. His faith was in God; the result was that he loved as God loved, he hoped not in some metamorphosis of existence but in the complete rulership of God. He obeyed God, not as one for whom obedience was the ultimate demand of God, but as one who knew "that love and faith alone make obedience

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[15]Ibid., p. 41f.   [16]Ibid., p. 42.   [17]Ibid.

possible and that God is the bestower of all these gifts."[18]

God as personal being and Jesus Christ as his son stand before us, as before all men, claiming relationship with us as the center of value and the incarnation of that radical faithfulness of God toward his people which arouses the response of faith among those who will understand.

II. THE MORAL ACT: PATTERN OF RESPONSE

In discussing Niebuhr's stance as a Christian radical monotheist, it was possible to show somewhat how he moved from general considerations to more specific Christian insights. Thus it is implied, if not stated, that Christian moral experience begins from the same stance. Niebuhr works in the same way as he develops his philosophy or moral experience and describes the moral act. Drawn out of his tightly woven argument, and using an outline he offers himself, are the following topics which will enable us to explore the nature of the moral act: 1) the self in relation (response, interpretation, accountability, and social solidarity), and 2) the interpreting self.

The Self in Relation.

H. Richard Niebuhr is a social realist. He apparently looks hard and long at life as it is really lived, making use of psychological and (especially) sociological insights. That is why he can

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[18]Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, pp. 18-21.

call himself a social existentialist.[19] A good example of the use of
social theory is his description of man-the-maker and man-the-citizen.
The facts that these two categories point to are almost self-evident;
they are indeed inescapable. In addition to a phenomenological de-
scription of each, Niebuhr notes the importance of these categories
for ethical theory. For man-the-maker is the future-directed and
goal-directed teleological man. For him decision in freedom is
always seen in the context of necessity, for working within and out-
side him are those final causes which make him the man he is and
becomes. About all he can really do is distinguish between the
various ends or goals and try to fit the right means with the right
ends.[20]

Man-the-citizen is not attracted or motivated toward an end.
He is driven by a law. He is both ruler and ruled; he is law-maker
and law abider. This symbol for man's life in community sees him in
genuine efforts to work out ways to live with others. Rules, mores,
sanctions, laws: structures of relationship all have importance to
him.[21]

Niebuhr presents these two categories or symbols because they
are genuine options to his own ethical theory. In fact, he must find
a way to account for the teleological and deontological viewpoints,
and the realities to which they refer, within his own relational
system.

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[19]Ibid., pp. 241-249.

[20]Niebuhr, The Responsible Self, p. 48.   [21]Ibid., pp. 51 ff.

For Niebuhr, the meaningful symbol is man-the-answerer. Such a symbol recognizes the entire relational context in which decisions are made. For man, throughout most of his life, is engaged in dialogue; he is responding to actions made upon him. And his response is shaped by his personal interpretation of the meaning of those actions; the actions aid him in the formation of his personal self-understanding as well as call from him an appropriate reaction.[22] Whereas man-the-maker, when faced with the questions "What shall I do," must first ask about his goals and ideals, and man-the-citizen, also with a moral question, must ask about the law and how it is to be obeyed, man-the-answerer first asks "What is going on?" Value terms given by Niebuhr to the three approaches are the good, the right, and the fitting. The following discussion will indicate how Niebuhr sees man-the-answerer as the truly moral person, and how this can be a valid Christian approach to moral experience.

Response. The first element in the symbol of man-the-answerer is one which calls attention to the fact of relation. All action is seen as response to action. Thus, even moral action is responsive, rather than merely goal-seeking or law-abiding. Further discussion of this element will be in the next major section on the interpreting self.

Interpretation. No action will result in response without interpretation, except physical reflexes. Moral action is response

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[22]Ibid. pp. 56-58.

to interpreted action upon us. His reflections upon the significance
of interpretation are vital keys to understanding Niebuhr's whole
theory. The principles of interpretation may help one to see the
actions upon us as parts of wholes, as related to each other, as
symbolic of much larger meanings than they themselves express.[23]
"And these large patterns of interpretation we employ seem to deter-
mine--though in no mechanical way--our responses to action upon us."[24]
Thus man-the-answerer acts in response to a world or context of mean-
ing. More will be indicated about interpretation in the next section,
The Interpreting Self.

Accountability. A major part of the reflection of a morally
responsible person is to consider the consequences of his acts or
response, not only upon the immediate recipient of those acts but
beyond them to related others. The effort here is to discern as
clearly as possible how the other is likely to interpret my response,
and how he is likely to react himself. Accountability is thinking
ahead in the running dialogue with others, thus taking into account
all the results which may be consequent upon one's responses. To be
accountable is to be prepared to be "held accountable for your
actions" by others.[25]

Social solidarity. To live in community is more than just
having neighbors everywhere. It is to be locked in a net of inter-
woven relationships, so that your destiny is bound to the destiny of

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[23]Ibid., pp. 61-63.   [24]Ibid., p. 62.   [25]Ibid., pp. 63-64

the others. Social solidarity, however, is not fatalistic. It is a faithful affirmation that we have become the selves we are through association with others, and that our happiness and theirs, our salvation and theirs, are shared and furthered, as well as our damnation. We depend on others; they depend on us.[26]

The flexible, open, yet binding structure of solidarity is indicated by Niebuhr when he speaks of the triadic form of life in response.[27] Encounter, or dialogue, always takes place in the presence of a third reality, a reality to which both the I and the Thou, or the I and the It are in relation. The third reality may be a natural object, a shared meaning or event, or social experience. The morally responsible person is now seen as not only directly accountable for the third, but accountable in the light of his relation to the Thou who is also related to the third. Mutuality of relationship may increase one's sense of accountability, but also should provide more adequate means for a fitting response, as persons do their moral work together.[28]

The triadic relation, if it is maintained, is also seen by Niebuhr as mutual loyalty to a cause--a value system. The self is not only responsible to the Thou, but to the cause to which the Thou is loyal and to which the multiple Thous are loyal. Thus a self is caught up in a complex world of meanings, communicated through a common language and form of discourse.

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[26] Ibid., p. 65; Cf. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, pp. 243 ff.

[27] Niebuhr, The Responsible Self, pp. 77-79. [28] Ibid., pp. 79 ff.

Social solidarity is the context within which a person's conscience develops. Niebuhr does not see conscience as a super-imposed realm of moral values pressed down on a self by "society" or by God. Rather, it is the direct result of life in relation, in triadic relation. Conscience arises in a person as the result of the interpretation of meanings drawn from "the constancies in the responses of individuals who are in community, a society."[29] As he perceives what is happening, and notes those relations which are constant and thus have value, a person begins to develop his own system of values. He can then "respond to the meaning of present action because such action is a part of a total action, something which means the total action or derives its meaning from that whole."[30] Conscience, for Niebuhr, represents the "mode of inter-personal interactions" brought to the awareness of a person through interpretation.[31]

The triadic relation, representing the more intimate world, points to a complex web of relations moving toward the inclusion finally of the entire universe of meaning. The more mature responses of a person keep in mind the widest possible scene. Thus one is not only responsible to the immediate Thou, or the intimate reference group but also to the "transcendent whole" which includes the self and the others. To see the pattern of things "whole" is to be able to critically review the fittingness of one's response not only to the whole but especially to the group and the Thou. To put it

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[29]Ibid., p. 78.   [30]Ibid.   [31]Ibid., p. 79.

theologically, the ultimate referent is God and the world which is his is the "cause" to which man is to be loyal.[32] All responses to one's companions, then, are interrelated with ones responses to God. And the latter is the source of judgment upon the former. We may say also that the man-to-man relation gives us some clue about the nature of the man-to-God relation. Such a universal community becomes the ground for the universal ethic and is recognized as the only kind valid for a truly moral person. Inasmuch as a Christian, through faith, finds that community of relational value to be defined in terms of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and recognizes that he has his own being as being-for others--a fact communicated to him through God's self revelation--then this universal ethic is additionally a Christian ethic. For H. Richard Niebuhr, social solidarity is never entirely "Christian solidarity." But Christians who know their total involvement in the world of relations with all sorts of men under God may live in solidarity according to a Christian style.

The Interpreting Self.

H. R. Niebuhr's relational theory of ethics is concerned with man's reflection upon the meaning of his relations. The aim is the growth of a self-conscious awareness of "where one stands" and "what the possible consequences of responses to actions upon one might be." No act is moral without ethical reflection. For this reason it appears that major keys to understanding Niebuhr are his principles

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[32]Ibid., pp. 84-88.

of interpretation, and what he makes of them.

The act of interpretation, vital to moral responding, includes three kinds of considerations, which I shall put in three questions: 1) What is going on now in the immediate situation and among the others to whom I am related? 2) What is going on now in the historical context, the whole flow of life from past through future which impinges on my present? 3) What is going on now in the ultimate dimension of my existence, wherein I am in absolute dependence upon the power of God? Niebuhr does not use the term "situation" (that I could find), but I think that such a term may define the scope of relationships in which many people attempt to make their decisions.

The answer to the first question can be summed up in one meaningful word: compresence.[33] It is a word which says that I am not alone, that as I face decision in my unique situation of relation just now, I am in communication with one who modifies the meaning of the present moment by the presence of his own being as challenge or as promise. My place on the stage of life is not a solitary place; it is a place where, though the decisions will be mine, they will be made in the light of the reality of my solidarity with humanity.

The answer to the second question is like the first. It is given in the word: fulness of time.[34] My place in history is not one empty of meaning. For the past and the future bring into this moment a wealth of content, not only information and hope, but a

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[33]Ibid., pp. 94-95.   [34]Ibid., pp. 95-97.

sense of continuing compresence, of relation in historical dimension,

that enlightens me in my present moral quest. H. R. Niebuhr expresses

the meaning of historical context in this way:

> Each present moment in which we decide is filled with memories
> and anticipations; and at each present moment there is present to
> us some other whom we have met before and expect to meet again.
> What make the moment of crisis, the critical, decisive present,
> so pregnant with meaning is not the fact that the self is alone
> here with the responsibility of decision, but that there is some-
> one compresent with him.....Every 'Now' is a historical 'Now,' in
> which a historical self is compresent with a historical other and
> historical companions.[35]

Thus decision is made in the context of time and space, of culture

and history. When a person facing decisions sees and interprets the

actions of others upon him in the light of the full sweep of history

and responds as one who is accountable to the whole of his historical

heritage and immediate relations, then he is being moral in his re-

sponse.

The answer to the third question, about the ultimate dimension,

is given in the words: trust and distrust.[36] What is really happening

with me as I consider the fact of my personal existence in the uni-

verse is summed up in the primordial interpretation. I trust, or I

distrust. Or perhaps, as is most common among all men, I distrust

and sometimes break through in moments of trust. I distrust the

ultimate power of being, and see the purpose of my life and disci-

plined actions of my days as ending in the futility of death. Or, I

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[35]Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, pp. 247-248.

[36]Niebuhr, The Responsible Self, Chap. 4, "Responsibility In Absolute Dependence."

trust the power of being which has set me upon this stage as the I that I am. I am confident that though all other relationships may confound and fail me, the One who has given me being is the One who affirms all being in the universe as good. Thus, I interpret my absolute dependency as a dependency upon a beneficent power, one of love and grace, whereas in my distrust I interpret that same dependency as a relation to an innimical power, one of enmity and fate. In trust I see that the ultimate One is himself trustworthy. I know him as Father. I am brought into relation to him in trust by Jesus whom I know as his trusting Son.

What is the ethical result of basic trust or faith? Niebuhr says that "The response in trust or distrust to the radical act of the self's and its world's creation qualifies all particular interpretations of finite actions upon the self and therefore all its reactions.....the response of faith...is present as a qualifying element in all interpretations and reactions to the movements of that finite world of particular beings in which the I is involved."[37] Thus basic trust provides the norm for the other elements of interpretation. We can see this norm-setting, qualifying role displayed in three developments from the ultimate I - Thou relation. The development of integrity: "I am one within myself as I encounter the One in all that acts upon me."[38] 2.) The development of relation in a universal society: "When I respond to the One creative power, I

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[37]Ibid., p. 121.   [38]Ibid., p. 122.

place my companions, human and subhuman and superhuman, in the one
universal society which has its center neither in me nor in any
finite cause but in the Transcendent One."[39]   3.) The development of
value perspective: "And now all my relative evaluations will be
subjected to the continuing and great correction. They will be made
to fit into a total process producing good--not what is good for me...
nor what is good for man...nor what is good for the development of
life...but what is good for being, for universal being, or for God,
center and source of all existence."[40]

For a Christian to respond to action upon him in such a way as
to respond to the action of God, means, then, to be fully aware of
Him who is fully compresent with him, and to act as one who is in
relation with Him. A person who has reflected upon the meaning of
his existence in relation with others, an existence interpreted as
ultimate, historical and time-full, develops a pattern or configura-
tion of meanings which help to give him knowledge of his own selfhood
and give him guidance for moral action, whether it be as man-the-
maker, man-the-citizen, or (in those crucial decisions which call for
re-evaluation of what is going on in the light of what is ultimately
going on) as man-the-answerer.

III. CONCLUSION

H. Richard Niebuhr's relational ethics is "fully human" in
that he describes the nature of the acting-responding relation in

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[39]Ibid., p. 123.   [40]Ibid., p. 125.

which every person, as man-the-answerer, is engaged. His ethics is also fully Christian, in that from the standpoint of his radical faith in the faithfulness of God, a person is able to respond effectively to the actions of others upon him. His response is enabled by a sense of personal integrity, brought into being through engagement with the center of value. His response is one that affirms the world which, being created, is good. His response is one of confidence, enabling him to endure suffering and enjoy delight alike because every thing and every event is _for_ something, and he is _for_ something. As he sees himself within the entire time-full context of history, the Christian becomes a person with identity, with purpose and with a pattern of flexible, characteristic responses which enable him to function in the world as a chosen son of God.

CHAPTER VI

DIALOGUE AS MINISTRY

In the teaching of ethics the dialogical relation of teacher
and student may be viewed as a ministry, for the relation often
mediates a genuine reconciliation. Dialogue may also be understood
as an educational function, for by it persons may learn to trust and
to move through life with courage and confidence. Dialogue is in a
similar way a dynamic element of counseling, for in dialogue many
insights into the nature of personal troubles are born and "midwifed"
into decisions. Thus, dialogue may be considered as a means to enable
ethical meanings to develop in persons leading to a more authentic
humanity.

However, to use dialogue merely as a means to some other goals
beyond itself, to treat dialogue superficially as not an end in it-
self, to strip dialogue of intrinsic worth, is to abort the real
meaning of dialogue. It is to birth nothing but fabricated inter-
action aimed at manipulating persons, situations, world and God. It
is to "use" dialogue, and when it is used it is mistreated, man-
handled, desecrated, profaned.

Dialogue partakes of the sacramental, of communion, of
baptism. As a way of relation it both carries and shapes meanings;
it brings into concrete connection persons who are single and apart;
it plunges persons into the realities of lived life.

Dialogue, then, like every reality which expresses the Chris-

tian way of relation, such as love, justice and mercy, is both end and means. It is a lived reality and a living method for one who is bent upon a ministry of meaning and healing.

This chapter reports on the meaning of dialogue, not by defining various principles, not by its comparison with similar notions, not by dialectical analysis, but by an attempt at dialogue itself. Inasmuch as it is possible, the attempt will be made to enter into a listening and responding relation with Martin Buber as he is given on the printed page, and thus, in dialogue with him, to discover what is addressed to us and to reflect on its meaning for education and for ethics. Already, before writing this chapter, the dialogue has been taking place, suggesting the choice of various materials, suggesting a form or structure that may give this record (not the dialogue itself) a sense of coherence and order. The result gives the following divisions which are not mutually exclusive:

    I. Dialogue as primal relation

   II. Dialogue as concrete reality

 III. Dialogue as function

Looking at dialogue in these three ways will enable us to see in fuller detail the richness of Buber's word to us. In addition, as they bear upon the central discussion, the comments of Ross Snyder and Reuel Howe, two modern "dialogical persons", will be contributed to the conversation.

I. DIALOGUE AS A PRIMAL RELATION

The dream of "Original Remembrance" with which Martin Buber opens his discussion of dialogue[1] illustrates concretely his own sense of relatedness, not to a man but to Voice, to Call, to One who stands over against him in relation. His certitude of relation is a non-ecstatic realization that "now it has happened." The Cry which gave rise to his answering cry has happened and he is very much aware of the happening. The primal relation, known not only to Buber but to countless others, to all who are open to it without reserve, is not some mystic immediacy but is relation, distance and nearness both, so that, as it were "from the air round about me, noiselessly, came the answer." The relation was established, it happened, and the cry was understood. It did not convey a message with content; it laid a claim upon him and made him answerable to it.

The Meaning of Primal

As a first relation dialogue has power, priority and ultimacy. Dialogue, when it has become the way of relation between persons or between man and God, exercises power as a life-producing relation. The power of dialogue overcomes the lesser powers of other kinds of human discourse, the analysis, the static reductionism, the reflecting monologue, in its mission of creativity and life-building. Through the whole manufactured world of circumstances and conditioners

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[1] Martin Buber, _Between Man and Man_, (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 1.

weigh heavily upon it, the power of dialogue breaks forth, suddenly, unexpectedly.

Dialogue is primal because it is a priori. It comes first; all other relations succeed it, change it, reject it, or confirm it. There is no relation without first a dialogical one.

Dialogue is ultimate; it indicates a relation with the unconditional, the eternal, the One God. Its ultimacy is exclusive; it will abide no rivals. Either dialogue is ultimate and exclusive, prior and powerful, or it is dead, meaningless. Dialogue is ultimate in its relating of the whole of one's being with the whole of another. It is not partial, but whole. One who enters dialogue enters it wholly, without reserve. The ultimacy of dialogue is faith; it is ultimate concern for the other. As Buber says, "...where unreserve has ruled, even wordlessly, between men, the word of dialogue has happened sacramentally."[2]

Dialogical Relation Between Whom?

The primal relation has sometimes been pictured by psychologists and philosophers as a kind of internal relation, as the centeredness of the self, as the standing of the self in relation to the self, apart from any relation with others. Such theories have few followers among present-day students of personality, but there are many naive people who think that Shakespeare's Palonius was right: "to thine own self be true." They think that the primal relation of a person is to

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[2]Ibid., p. 4.

the self.

Buber has no primal word "I-I." Thus, as he dissects the position of Heidegger, he proclaims that "Heidegger's 'existence' is monological."[3] The man of <u>real</u> existence in Heidegger's sense, the man of <u>self-being</u>, who in Heidegger's view is the goal of life, is not the man who really lives with man, but the man who can no longer really live with man, the man who now knows a real life only in communication with himself.[4] The primal relation is not merely man with his own being.

A primary word, because it is one that speaks of a realm of human reality, a category for what actually occurs, is "<u>I-It</u>." <u>I-It</u> expresses not dialogical relation but the appearance of relation. <u>I-It</u> expresses the inter-action of the person (or better, the individual) with his environment. It expresses the Subject-Object connection and the host of experiences by which that connection is observed, analyzed, appreciated, used, helped, improved, shaped and formed. <u>I-It</u> is a necessary, but non-dialogical word. It is primary, but not primal. "In all the seriousness of truth, hear this: without <u>It</u> man cannot live. But he who lives with <u>It</u> alone is not a man."[5]

The other primary word, which expresses the genuine dialogical relation, is <u>I-Thou</u>. In contrast to the seeming overwhelming leaven of <u>I-It</u> in our modern world, <u>I-Thou</u> is deceptively and subtly at work.

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[3]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 168.   [4]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 172.

[5]Martin Buber, <u>I and Thou</u> (Edinburgh: Clark, 1937), p. 34.

"How powerful is the unbroken world of <u>It</u>, and how delicate are the appearances of the Thou!"[6] Yet, the <u>I-Thou</u> relation is the only one which is genuine and filled with hope.

<u>Thou in the world</u>. The secular man, in this and every generation, has turned his face to the world, <u>this</u> world, saying "This land is my land," saying "I accept the world, I affirm it as my only home; I stand both within and against the world, shaping it and being shaped by it." Buber would see the affirmation of the world today as a sign of hope. Take the plunge! Encounter the world in all its concreteness; let the sciences open up its intricacies; involve yourself in the heartaches and joys of humanity! Dare to see the world, the entire cosmos, not as Object out there, to be handled, examined, experienced, but as a whole reality with which you 'have to do.' Dare to get mixed up in the world, to penetrate it, to let it penetrate you, not as a thing but as a power; not in the coolness of Subject-Object detachment, but in the heat of concrete relation. "Meet the world with the fullness of your being," urges Buber, "and you will meet Him."

We have indeed had enough of the acosmic religious view, the 'world is not my home' variety. The divine One, who makes himself present to us as Presence, as Call, as the Face before whom we stand, is revealed to us only in and through the world. He is cosmic God. One who in dialogue, in openess and unreserve meets the world as it

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[6]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 98.

is and as it engages him with its own call for responsibility, dis-

covers that Thou addresses him in the world.

Thou in the Person. The dialogical relation is personal

engagement. Thus it can be said that the dialogical person approaches

the world, and is approached by the world, in a personal way, as being

to being, having to do with each other. Personal, in this sense, does

not mean individual. To note the 'individual differences' of people

in order to mark out their development and type them according to

nomothetic categories can be a very impersonal act. To "treat some-

one as an individual" does not mean to affirm him, to engage him; it

means to "treat" him. Thus, to set him apart from others as one who

has particular needs, rights, abilities and these should be taken

into account.

The person in dialogue is the one who is both over-against me

and with me, both acknowledged and confirmed. He is another man or

woman or child (perhaps even, at times, a group of people) who stands

before me with a claim.

Soon after the Second World War an Italian film was produced,

entitled Shoe-Shine Boy (I believe). There were no words, only the

appearance of a slight, large-eyed urchin, lugging his shine kit

about the streets, approaching the people emerging from the war with

a claim--his person, him. In him, those who had eyes to see and a

heart to understand found the Thou, the Present One, God, addressing

them.

The person, in and of the world, is concrete reality. If one

says that he will meet the reality of God while bypassing the reality

of his neighbor, he will not find God. "The word of him who wishes to speak with men without speaking with God is not fulfilled; but the word of him who wishes to speak with God without speaking with men goes astray."[7] Herein lies our contemporary tragedy: there is much speaking but little fulfillment; there is a surge of glossalia but inadequate meeting. The I and the Thou of the dialogue are two (or more) persons who meet and discover, not information about each other but each other, the Thou of each other.

Thou in Nature and Form. A third "sphere" for dialogical meeting may seem foreign to secular man oriented to the immediate world of Thing. Yet, in its whole sweep of meaning the category of the dialogical relation includes more than person in the world. One may be engaged with nature and form in the world as well, and be addressed through that engagement.

Empirical man has been trained, with good reason, to view nature with a cool, fearless eye. As he confronts nature he will embody the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. He takes seriously his vocation of dominion, of rulership, as he acquaints himself with the dynamics and substance of nature in order to control it. Sometimes, however, empirical man lowers his guard of scientific method and attitude and becomes engaged with the nature that confronts him, claims him, addresses him. The creature, the thing, is now the Thou. Except for those like St. Francis, there is no speech, no

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[7]Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 15.

sign of communication. Yet, as one perceives the natural being in its wholeness one is aware that he is encountering reality and utters the primary word Thou.

Form perhaps, unlike Nature, cannot usually have 'thingness'. Some people may make formal laws and esthetic standards into a set of eternal values, and treat them as actual, and 'write them up' but form is essentially pure potential. How, then, does one enter into relation with potentiality? Buber, not an idealist, expresses the relation as a concrete happening: "I can neither experience nor describe the form which meets me, but only body it forth."[8] To meet the form which one beholds is to be commanded to bring it into reality, to actualize it as work of art, as deed, as law, as thing. "I lead the form across--into the world of It." As actualized, the form will be a thing for many, but "from time to time it can face the receptive beholder in its whole embodied form,"[9] it can be to him the Thou. "We speak the primary word with our being, though we cannot utter Thou with our lips."[10]

In every sphere of the world, the personal, the natural, the formal, the I meets the Thou. This is the dialogical relation, the primal relation. "In every sphere in its own way, through each process of becoming that is present to us we look out toward the fringe of the eternal Thou; in each we are aware of a breath from the eternal Thou; in each Thou we address the eternal Thou."[11] Who is

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[8]Buber, I and Thou, p. 10. [9]Ibid. [10]Ibid., p. 6.
[11]Ibid.

engaged in the dialogical relation?   Thou.

The Single One

The other, seemingly nearer, side of the relation is the personal I. For the primary relational word is I - Thou, one word. They define each other; they exist together in symbyotic relation. They are not the same, yet they can never be apart. "I became through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou. All real living is meeting."[12]

Kierkegaard provides Buber with a language for discussing the I side of the relation. It is his category of the Single One. The Single One is not the subject in a subject-object connection. Nor is he the individual in a crowd or population sample. He is this One, this "concrete singularity," this one who is always becoming a single, whole, integral man. The Single One is not merely someone with a soul, a center, which sets him apart from other souls. Rather, he is a total being, a whole, a unified person.

The Single One knows solititude, but not loneliness. Though he is distinct from and apart from all other beings, he is also in relation with them. He is never utterly alone. As one who is Single, such a person is not thrown by inner longings for communion into the crowd. Yet, he above the lonely individual, is able, in the crowd, to establish contact and effect meeting.

The Single One is not a mystic. His I does not "radically

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[12]Ibid., p. 11.

melt away into the Thou."[13] Nor is he merely an individual develop-

ing personality. He is the person who stands alone before God, who

discovers his singularity in his meeting with the Thou, the meeting

with the world in person, the world in nature, the world in form, and

thus with Thou.

The One becomes Single in the meeting, and meeting takes place

in the time and space of the concrete world. Whereas, Buber notes,

Kierkegaard thought that the Single One must ultimately be apart from

the world to meet the Thou, in reality one cannot become Single except

that the meeting with Thou occur in the world. A significant passage

in Buber's "Question to the Single One" bears witness to the world-

liness of the dialogical becoming, the birth of the Single One.

> It cannot be that the relation of the human person to God is
> established by the subtraction of the world. The Single One must
> therefore take his world, what of the world is extended and en-
> trusted to him in his life, without any reduction, into his life's
> devotion; he must let his world partake of its essentiality. It
> cannot be that the Single One finds God's hands when he stretches
> his hands out and away from creation. He must put his arms round
> the vexatious world, whose true name is creation; only then do
> his fingers reach the realm of lightning and of grace. God's
> question to him, heard and received in faith is a question won-
> drously turned in the wild crude sound the speech of the
> situation . And he, the Single One, must answer, by what he does
> and does not do, he must accept and answer for the hour, the hour
> of the world, of all the world, as that which is given to him,
> entrusted to him. Reduction is forbidden; you are not at liberty
> to select what suits you, the whole cruel hour is at stake, the
> whole claims you, and you must answer--Him.[14]

Being the Single One, who finds his singularity by intimate

relation in a dialogical way with the world, and thus with God, a

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[13]Buber, _Between Man and Man_, p. 43-44.   [14]_Ibid._, pp. 65-66.

person becomes not only fulfilled in a self-unifying way but also becomes the Answerer, the Responder. He is answerable and responsible. The answerability and responsibility of the Single One is the key thical meaning to emerge from dialogue. It is the aim of the ministry of dialogue to bring this meaning into focus for those who engage in dialogical education and learning.

The Single One does not aim to become 'good' or 'right' for his own sake. To do so would be to cut off engagement with the Thou, whom alone is affirmed ultimately. Rather, the Single One becomes a person who is "for something," or for someone. His very becoming being is for relation with another becoming being, or for relation with God.[15] The Single One is himself fulfilled, partakes fully of the 'image of God' "when, as much as he can in a personal way, he says Thou with his being to the beings living round about him."[16]

Answerability is not voluntary; it is not optional. Genuine existence is life in relation, life together. Perhaps it is possible to escape somewhat from the demand upon us, the Divine Imperative, the word addressed to us as Command. Yet, inasmuch as a person retains some measure of his humanity, and mirrors the image of Thou with whom he is in relation, he knows that he is answerable to and for others. Answerability is an ontological category defining the nature of the relation of man before God, and of man before man, and of the community of man together before the divine will calling for love.

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[15]Ibid., p. 50.　　[16]Ibid., p. 57.

Such answerability, or responsibility, which is the alternate word for the same quality of relation, becomes personal and real in the acts of loyalty, of adherance to truth, of obedience.[17] It is to be the communication of truth oneself, and not merely to point to the truth somewhere else. It is to obey the Lord, to heed the command to enter the relation.

The Single One who is answerable is also free to answer, or to be mute if he chooses. Though the world appearing and regarded as It clamps down upon a person as causality and fate, such a view of the world "does not weigh heavily on man, who is not limited to the world of It, but can continually leave it for the world of relation." Such a man is free. He is able to move between the two worlds, the two primary modes, of I-It and I-Thou. In the primary relation of I-Thou "the spirit is kindled ever anew within him." However, the Single One, because he is finite and not God, moves again into the relation of I-It, and this provides the test: "...in an unholy and needy country, this spark is to be proved." Gladly, freely, if sometimes painfully and with suffering, the Single One proves the integrity of his relatedness with God. It is a free act joined to and surrounded by an awareness of destiny. Yet, his free answer to the demands of relation, his response, is not made in order to prove his faith. In fact, there is no aim or goal in mind at all; as the answer is for the sake of the one who demands, calls, stands in need. A free act by the Single One is free of necessity or complusion from others, and free of

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[17]Ibid., pp. 45-47.

the compulsion of self-service. It is free of conditions imposed by the environment, and free of the powers of brute instincts and established habits. Because, in his relation of I-Thou he has broken through all the powers of I-It, the Single One is free, he is a man of decision. And he decides in the light of his destiny as a free related man, rather than in the light of compulsions, urges, or conditioners. "Only he who knows relation and knows about the presence of the Thou is capable of decision. He who decides is free, for he has approached the Face."[18]

Thus, dialogue is a primal relation, one that has ontological significance, not mere passing triviality. It is a wordly relation, not an unwordly or transcendental one. It is the firm loyal, truthful, obedient response of a person to the Thou whom he engages in the world of the person, of nature and of potential for being. Whereas most men find themselves hectically involved in the affairs of the world, and in Thoreau's phrase, leading "lives of quiet desperation," there come moments for all men, some more than others, when out of the involvement breaks forth genuine dialogue. "The life of dialogue is not one in which you have much to do with men, but one in which you really have to do with those with whom you have to do."[19] When a person "really has to do" with another person, that is responsible dialogue.

The meaning of the dialogical relation has an escatalogical

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[18]Buber, _I and Thou_, p. 51. [19]Buber, _Between Man and Man_, p. 20.

dimension if one takes it seriously, which sees the becoming not only of the dialogical person but of a new community.

> We expect a theophany of which we know nothing but the place, and the place is called community. In the public catacombs of this expectation there is no single God's Word which can be clearly known and advocated Buber is opposed to the views of Luther and Calvin , but the words delivered are clarified for us in our human situation of being turned to one another. There is no obedience to the coming one without loyalty to his creature. To have experienced this is our way.[20]

II. DIALOGUE AS CONCRETE REALITY

The dialogical person, in terms used by Reuel Howe, is authentic, open, disciplined and related.[21] As an <u>authentic</u> person he presents himself in his whole reality to the other; he gives his total being to the other in dialogue; he recognizes the claim of the other person upon his whole attention, and is alert to any tendency to be partial in his responses. <u>Openness</u> suggests the readiness to reveal oneself to the other, and to accept unconditionally the other person into the relationship. Openness is risky, it demands courage, because one who is open is liable to be "hurt," especially when the other person is bent on thwarting the dialogue and twisting the relation to serve his own ends. <u>Discipline</u> means trained, controlled relation. It means ability to give oneself to the dialogue in the face of risk, and ability to allow the other freedom to respond as he will, without force. The dialogical person is <u>himself related</u>;

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[20]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 7.

[21]Reuel Howe, <u>The Miracle of Dialogue</u>, (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), pp. 67 ff.

he maintains relation with several other persons and with God. Thus, when he moves into a new engagement, he moves into it as one who is aware of the meaning of dialogue, and ready to accept the responsibility which the new meeting will surely bring.

An adequate definition of the meaning of the ministry of dialogue needs careful description, such as given above of the dialogical person. Therefore the discussion moves now from the "meaning of dialogue" as primal relation, to its "evidentness" in life. The report of dialogue, "there it is," will become a phenomenal notation of "what it is." In a fundamental respect this shift of view indicates a shift from engagement to detachment, from the world of Thou to that of It, in the course of this paper. The flow between the two primary realms enables the investigator to take a critical look at the relation in which he has been engaged.

The following description moves through four steps, arranged in the pattern of the occurrence of dialogue, in order to give some notion of the dynamic as well as the structure of the inter-personal relation. These are 1) the address, 2) the meeting, 3) the dialogue, 4) the breakdown and renewal. As an event of wholeness, as a total happening, of course, dialogue is not adequately described by such abstraction. "Events come at us" in Ross Snyder's words. But, to talk about them means to pick them apart.

The Address

The beginning is the occurrence, the happening, the address. The beginning is not an interior psycho-physical stirring, a groping

of the personality, in whatever stage of development, toward some other outside itself, or seeking another who "must be there." The beginning is happening, being accosted by someone, meeting a person, encountering a creature of nature, (or the whole of visible nature as in an outdoor panorama), or standing before an object and recognizing its actual and potential form. "...living means being addressed..."[22]

The reality and concreteness of the address was reported in Section I. The address presents itself as world. Now it must be stressed that such an address is not extraordinary, though it may sometimes appear as such. Every meeting of the Thou is not as overwhelming as young Isaiah's meeting in the temple. The order in the world is not turned over to bring on a theophany. Rather, the address comes in everday affairs, in the events of the routine life. Perhaps a good deal of the time we are unaware of being addressed. "The waves of the aether roar on always, but for most of the time we have turned off our receivers."[23] Even so, the address is there, powerfully present. "What occurs to me addresses me. In what occurs to me the world-happening addresses me."[24]

Most of us have the capacity to avoid being addressed, perhaps most of the time. Like a driver on the highway accelerating past a hitch-hiker, we can insist to ourselves that "he has no claim on me." One cannot exist without relief in the primal relation. Therefore,

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[22]Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 10.

[23]Ibid., p. 11.   [24]Ibid.

man's work, as man, is to objectify, to "cool" the relation, which is sometimes done at the expense of the address in the relation. "Only by sterilizing it, remove-the seed of address from it, can I take what occurs to me as a part of the world-happening which does not refer to me. The inter-locking sterilized system into which all this only needs to be dovetailed is man's titanic work."[25] Man's work, in one of its primary modes, is the creation of the world of _It_, a world in which he is not addressed, but which he may control.

Before describing "what is heard" in the address of dialogue, there is the prior matter of perception. Perception is to see with meaning. Buber notes three ways to perceive "a man who is living before our eyes," three meaningful ways to look at him.[26]

1) The perceiver may be an observer. His whole intent is to "fix the man in his mind," to discover what makes him act the way he does, to analyze his behavior, to note his continuing character traits, to be quick to catch his self-revelations as clues to his personality, perhaps to "write him up." This is the way of empirical science, of developmental psychology, of aspects of education and counseling. The validity of the purposes and methods of such observation are unquestioned so long as the limits of observation are affirmed.

2) The perceiver may be an onlooker. His attitude is casual,

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[25]Ibid.   [26]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

without intent. He is ready to "see what he will see" but is not seeking to comprehend anything. He is "just watching," at ease, without purpose. Yet, in simple trust he is willing to take the risk that his mind will "preserve what is worth preserving." Many an artist, Buber asserts, takes this attitude. When an event strikes him with sufficient force and clarity he may begin to pay attention to it, allowing it to suggest its shape and meaning. The onlooker may become an observer, then, or an answerer.

3) The perceiver may be an answerer. (This is my use of the term. Buber doesn't give a noun for this way of perceiving, in this particular discussion.) He perceives as one who is becoming aware of being answerable before the other person, as one who, in some way, perhaps not yet known to him, is responsible to and for the other. "We may term this way of perception becoming aware." Such a one does not receive information about the other person so much as he recognizes that he "says something to me, addresses something to me, speaks something that enters my own life.....A word demanding an answer has happened to me."

"Lord, let me become aware!" is, I believe, a prayer of the dialogical person. It is a prayer that recognizes the ultimate seriousness and risk of relation, yet confesses that without it one loses both the will and the power to live.

How may we speak, now of the address of the Present One over against us? Our inclination is to ask, "What is he telling us?" "What is his message?" Buber suggests that we put our dictionary down, as the Word does not come in so many words. "What occurs to

me says something to me, but what it says to me cannot be revealed by any esoteric information; for it has never been said before nor is it composed of sounds that have ever been said.....it is not a <u>what</u> at all, it is said into my very life."[27] Such remarks appear evasive and incomprehensible. Usually, as we discuss a happening we insist on knowing "what happened." We seek detailed explanations. We contemplate the possibility of it ever happening again. Perhaps we can make it happen. We treat the meeting of the Thou and Address of the Thou as a thing, an It. If it cannot be an It, then we consider that it has no genuine reality.

But the concrete reality which is addressed to us does not have 'thingness', even though we must use, at times, the language of objectivity to talk about it. Relation is not a thing. It cannot be re-experienced. It happens once-and-for-all. It cannot even be re-membered in all of its reality. Yet, what the happening "said" to us can be remembered. What the experience of relation and dialogue meant to us can be remembered. Because what has occurred is that the Thou, the Addresser, has entrusted to me his being, his whole being in creation. For example, God has entrusted to me the mystery of his grace, his gift. God has also entrusted to me the world, and I am now responsible for it. The child I meet has entrusted to me his becoming. The youth with whom I am engaged in dialogue has entrusted to me, and I to him, the richness of ethical meanings which are to emerge from it. The signs of address, that which points to the

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[27]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 12-13.

reality of the address and which we can talk about, the words of speech with which we can analyze, are readily accepted by Buber as "indispensable for the work of the human spirit."[28] But they are wholly inadequate to communicate what can only be known directly as "concrete world reality," in direct relation. How may we speak of the Address? We may speak of it in this way: "The true name of concrete reality is the creation which is entrusted to me and to every man. In it the signs of address are given to us."[29]

The Meeting

Meeting occurs within the dimensions of the world, within time and space; meeting is not, and cannot be, unwordly. It can not be "God out there" meeting "me here." Nor can it be "that ancient prophet of a wholly foreign world" meeting "this prophet in this familiar world," nor can it be "the Jewish, European philosopher, Buber," meeting "the Christian, American, theological student," the meeting of two men from two worlds. Meeting occurs within one world. That world in which it occurs is a "meaning world" as much as a physical world. If those who perceive one another and would move toward each other in dialogue do not share the same world, then genuine dialogue cannot take place; there is no meeting. The Incarnation, as concrete reality, is the recognition of the sharing of this world, this moment, by God as we meet, as he addresses me, in the worldling, Christ. When persons of two worlds stand turned toward each other,

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[28]Ibid., p. 12.   [29]Ibid., p. 13.

both are perplexed about how to effect the dialogue, and call for the tools of translation. The task of hermeneutic is to thus stand between two worlds as the mediator of dialogical meaning between them. In effect, to bring the two worlds into one over-arching one-world, so that the meaning of the Address to one is available in the meaning of the other. The task of education and of counseling is similar, in the view of this writer. But more of this matter in Section III. The world in which meeting takes place has ultimate significance (by this I do not mean just environment).

Following through on the descriptive intention of this Section, we need to ask what occurs during the meeting of those engaged in dialogue. Ross Snyder, in his book, The Ministry of Meaning, expresses our predicament when, "events come at us--and we have to interpret and encounter them." These events are insistent, the voice of address in them will be heard! Snyder continues, "The energies of the world don't leave us alone. Our own hungers don't leave us alone.."[30] Something happens to us and in us.

Five words carry the weight of meaning to describe what happens: 1) encounter, 2) turning-toward, 3) inclusion, 4) confirmation, 5) mutuality, presented here in a somewhat functional order. In essence, it should be remembered, there is only one word: I-Thou, the word of primal relation.

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[30] Ross Snyder, The Ministry of Meaning, (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches and World Council of Christian Education, 1965), p. 6.

1) Meeting is <u>encounter</u>. Perhaps this has been expressed often enough to obviate further discussion. Or perhaps it is self-evident. Yet, one emphasis needs to be stressed again. The encounter of dialogue is <u>real</u>, not fake. It is deep, not surface. It involves risk, not security. It is whole, not partial. True, one may move gingerly, hesitantly, toward the encounter, for fear of hurting or being hurt, but when all reserve is thrown off, then meeting occurs. Then encounter moves toward engagement, "over-againstness" moves toward "withness."

2) Meeting is <u>turning-toward</u>. Buber calls this the "basic movement" of dialogue.[31] First, it is an inner action, shall we say a disposition of the heart. "...the life of dialogue seems ...to have inextricably joined to it as its minimum constitution one thing, the mutuality of the inner action."[32] Such movement is a function of desire, of Eros in its fundamental sense. It is desire for meeting that moves one toward the other.

Second, turning-toward is behavior, communication of that turning to the other person, the giving of signs that say, "I recognize and turn toward you. You are important to me; I do not turn my back on you; I face you." Attentitiveness, gesture, speech, are all human signs of turning-toward, and are usually welcomed by the other person unless he suspects insincerity.

Turning-toward facilitates meeting, by calling forth a like mutuality in the other person. "For no man is without strength for

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[31]Buber, <u>Between Man and Man</u>, p. 22.   [32]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 8.

expression, and our turning towards him brings about a reply, however imperceptible, however quickly smothered, in a looking and sounding forth of the soul that are perhaps dissipating in mere inwardness and yet do exist."[33] The fact of this "reply" by the other may well be assumed by one who personally knows the reality of dialogue, and knows also the multitudinous ways in which he himself averts the turn of another toward him.

3) Meeting is inclusion. This, of course, is the aim and result, the deeper meaning of the action of turning-toward. Inclusion is the reaching-out and the bringing-in. It is the complete realization of the other person, "not by fancy but by the actuality of the being.....It is the extension of one's own concreteness, the fulfillment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates."[34]

Maurice Friedman, one of Buber's translators, reminds us that the dialogical relation includes the function of "making present, imagining the real."[35] Elsewhere Buber calls this "experiencing the other side." (See discussion of this point in Section III where it is related to the educational function of dialogue). In discussing Buber's term "making present," Friedman notes that he means by it, "imagining quite concretely what another man is wishing, feeling, perceiving and thinking."[36]

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[33]Ibid., p. 22.   [34]Ibid., p. 97.

[35]Maurice Friedman, "Martin Buber's 'Theology' and Religious Education," Religious Education, LIV: 1 (Jan.-Feb., 1959), 10.
[36]Ibid.

Inclusion is such a basic concept for the way of dialogue that Buber lets it stand as one definition of dialogue itself: "A relation between person that is characterized in more or less degree by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation."[37] In his treatise on education, Buber notes that inclusion involves not only relation between persons and the sharing of experience or happening, but also yet remaining an autonomous person "while living through the common event" as seen and from the standpoint of the other. In other words, inclusion does not in any sense mean the loss of self, or any kind of mystic unity of selves into some new whole. Inclusion is the act of "being with" while still "being apart."

4) Meeting is confirmation. Perhaps this term, as well as any, indicates the autonomous relation of the dialogue. Friedman describes it thus: "true confirmation accepts the independent otherness of one's partner and does not wish to impose upon him one's own relation to truth."[38] Confirmation enables the dialogue to proceed on the firm ground of integrity, for the partners see that not only are they accepted unconditionally now, but also that they will be allowed to continue to be "themselves" throughout the relation. They are confirmed in their right to being. A key to effective dialogue is the communication of such confirmation to the other in dialogue.

5) Meeting is mutuality. For Buber this is the most comprehensive term for meeting in dialogue. It expresses the fullness of

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[37]Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 97.   [38]Friedman, op. cit. p. 9.

relation, that sense of togetherness which permits free flow of communication of self from one to another, that spirit of friendship, that joy of relation which comes from some measure of satisfied desire. Mutuality is the telos of meeting. It requires no further words to justify its reality; it only requires to be allowed to <u>be</u>. Mutuality is agreement, not necessarily on the content of discussion or on any other fact at all, but on the importance of this particular dialogue in this particular moment, with these particular persons. Mutuality is that spirit of relation which enables the dialogue to continue, and empowers the partners with patience and desire as they overcome all the barriers that might otherwise separate them. Mutuality is that common bondedness that gives permanence to the relation, so that even after the meeting of the moment is over the relation may continue, perhaps for years, and picked up again innumerable times, seemingly without break, when the partners meet again. Mutuality gives worth to the relation.

The Dialogue

As understood here, dialogue is a relation available to all men; it is not a uniquely Christian mode of being. Quite to the contrary, dialogue is the only relation which gives a man of faith opportunity for faith-confession so that it will be heard by another. It must be added also that dialogue is not love. Dialogue and love are not correlaries. They do not define each other, unless one is to force the maning of love into the ultimate, primary word of <u>I-Thou</u>. Perhaps it is possible to do this, but love is not commonly understood

in this way. Love is an ambiguous word expressing many concrete realities of interaction among persons. Dialogue is only one mode of relation. Perhaps the fullest meaning of "agape" may comprehend the way of dialogue.

What can be said further about the mutuality of meeting which is dialogue? While it is in dynamic process dialogue 1) takes on the reality of a faith-relation, 2) engenders meaning, 3) flows as a co-personal stream of consciousness, and 4) creates community in which persons become responsible to and for the others.

1) **Faith-relation**. Dialogue, as has already been stressed, results from, and establishes, an exclusive, if momentary connection between the partners. Perhaps this seems obvious if we point to the **I-Thou** as a person-to-God mode of being. In discussing the question of "who speaks?" in the address of the Thou, Buber indicates it is God. "If we name the speaker of this speech God, then it is always the God of the moment, a moment God." This is not to say that God is not the Lord of all moments. He is. But he can be known only and directly in this moment, this happening of dialogue. Surely, if one becomes related most intimately and personally with that which meets him as the Thou, then in all such meetings one will discover God. Buber puts it this way: "...out of the givers of the signs he means the actual occurrences, of whatever kinds , the speakers of the words in lived life, out of the moment Gods there arises for us with a single identity the Lord of the voice, the One."[39]

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[39] Buber, _Between Man and Man_, p. 15.

Surely faith is a reality among humans, as well as between man and God.

> For there I, the lover, turn to this other human being, the beloved, in his otherness, his independence, his self-reality, and turn to him with all the power of intention of my own heart. I certainly turn to him as to one who is there turning to me, but in that very reality, not comprehensible by me but rather comprehending me, in which I am there turning to him. I do not assimilate into my own soul that which lives and faces me, I vow it faithfully to myself and myself to it, I vow, I have faith.[40]

Such a relation has all the healing and enabling power which finds expression in the common confession, "He had faith in me!"

2) Meaning. An actual dialogical experience engenders meaning, or many meanings. That is, it brings to being in the mind of one so engaged, a pattern of understandings and appreciations, an altogether mental grasp of the world around him along with an existential reliance on what appears to be for him the firm ground of all reality. How can we speak of "meaning"? Ross Snyder does so in his own vivid style:

> These encounters awake us or deaden us, expand or shrivel our identity and self-respect. We are forced to design a world which tells us what this "home territory" of our life is. And when to run, submit, or live with.

> All this is meaning.

> Meaning, therefore, begins with encounter, with experiencing.[41]

"Meaning" is one of those terms which, I suspect, positivists and behaviorists would eliminate from usage. Yet, it is an effective way to indicate that life has depth, wealth, relation, worth, or

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[40]Ibid., p. 29.   [41]Snyder, op. cit. p. 6.

their opposites. Developing meaning is what we are doing when we "design a world" that makes sense of the chaotic world in which we live. It is a specific function of the person, and is enabled by dialogue. Could we put it so strongly as to say that growing meaning is impossible without dialogue?

The pattern of the growth of meaning is briefly indicated in Snyder's book, The Ministry of Meaning.[42] It presents meaning as growing from 1) encounter or experiencing which forces us to design a world of meaning; 2) possessing its felt significance: "every great idea was first a surge within us."; 3) remembering previous and similar experiences and relating the new and old together, 4) organizing "pictures and ideas" of the new meaning and relating them to the present systems by which we live, and 5) "becoming Man," "a creature who lives as culture, and not just as biology." The becoming man, who lives in a culture or world of meaning thus shares in "a corporate mind" which he helps to form. Snyder also calls this culture "a reference community of interpretation."

It is not our task here to critically evaluate Snyder's theory of developing meaning. Rather, we are content to place this development within the context of the dialogical relation.

3) Co-personal stream of consciousness. The growth of meaning is a creative work. It is the designing of culture, or world, which through the signs of language, art, music, and the host of cultural

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[42]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

media, actualizes meaning. But culture is not created in a vacuum. Genius will not thrive alone. Dialogue provides a friendly world in which the creative act matures. In this sense, dialogue becomes a function of creative meaning, a legitimate "means" to be fostered for the sake of developing meaning.

The mutuality of the dialogical relation gives rise to what Snyder calls the "co-personal stream of consciousness,"[43] that flow of meaning between the partners as in dialectic fashion they probe the depths of what has meaning to them. The other word for it is "conversation," or better, dialogical conversation, with "the play of mind upon mind, of experience upon experience, until a happly explosion of fresh thought takes place."[44] That is creation through dialogue.

4) Community. A community has centerdness as well as togetherness. The mutuality of two or more persons is founded upon the free flow of being between them, and also upon the sharing of a common center, the recognition of the Thou in their midst. Buber declares that true community arises when people are "taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Centre, and...their being in living mutual relation with one another."[45]

"Community is where community happens."[46] We may take this as a warning as well as a statement of fact. Community is not created

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[43]Ibid., p. 20.   [44]Ibid.   [45]Buber, I and Thou, p. 45.

[46]Buber, Between Man and Man, pp. 31-32.

by the scheming minds of men, even with "the best of intentions." Community happens because dialogue happens. And dialogue happens when men are free to move toward one another, when they are able to seek "confirmation in life lived towards one another."

Community is responsible relation. It is being both with and answerable to a multitude of persons. The person in community is bound, covenanted, to the others. He shares the destiny, suffers the destiny, of the community, and is willing to take upon himself the suffering for it. This does not mean blindness to its faults. Rather he is always "confronting each movement watchfully and carefully that it does not miss truth and loyalty."[47] In a phrase well known by Christians, the dialogical person is "in but not of the world." Thus, he stands in and for the community, but as a man "put into the service of decision."[48] That decision is to stand and speak always on behalf of the person, and against all that strips anyone of his personhood. He stands against all forms of collectivism, and their dehumanizing demands. He stands for the Single One, and attempts even in his weakness to be the Single One who "changes the crowd into Single Ones."[49] Community, then, results from the offerings of self in dialogue and the acceptance of responsibility for a life together.

The Breakdown and the Renewal

Genuine dialogue in all its purity cannot be maintained. Each person must "get on with the business of making a living," as it were.

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[47]Ibid., p. 64.   [48]Ibid.   [49]Ibid., p. 65.

He must move from the primary mode of I-Thou to the primary mode of I-It. The dialogical person moves back and forth between these two realms of being freely and ungrudgingly, for he accepts both as genuine.

However, many occurrences of dialogue are not freely given up; they are destroyed, often prematurely. Reuel Howe, in The Miracle of Dialogue, has delineated five elements which bring on a "dialogical crisis."[50] 1) Each person asserts himself. 2) Each feels threatened by the other with respect to the goal of their meeting. 3) Each believes he must save and justify himself before the other. 4) Each feels he needs to sacrifice the other person in order to thus save himself. 5) Each, in the interests of presenting "the truth" attempts to move the other person to his own view.

Those entering dialogue, Howe also notes, come with a load of culture and personal experience with which to build barriers between themselves and others, to secure themselves in the world of It.[51] These include language, meaning images, anxieties, systems of defence in the personality, specific purposes. If the dialogue can not deal with these barriers, accept them as a part of the "curriculum" of conversation and overcome them, then it breaks down and never comes to its fruition.

Martin Buber sees the breakdown as inevitable from a broader

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[50]Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue, p. 95.

[51]Ibid., p. 48.

perspective, that of the general temper of our modern age.[52] An age

that glories in the life of I-It, and hardly misses the fulfillment

of I-Thou. "In our age the I-It relation, gigantically swollen, has

usurped, practically uncontested, the mastery and the rule. The I of

this relation, an I that possesses all, makes all, succeeds with all,

this I that is unable to say Thou, unable to meet a being essentially,

is the lord of the hour." The breakdown in dialogue, the stillbirth

of dialogue, occurs not only because those entering it bring their

baggage and it gets in the way of their conversation and meeting. It

occurs because they are immersed in a whole world in which the pres-

ence of God is eclipsed, in which the knowledge of the Thou is put

out of sight by the Thing, the world of It. May we say (what Howe

does not say, I believe) that dialogue is prevented and broken by sin?

Now the question becomes, how may dialogue be renewed? In

fact, in the face of such powerful forces, how is it possible for us

to hope that dialogue may ever occur, that one today will meet the

Thou who is so intent upon addressing him? Buber, whose writings

appear so timeless, has continually expressed a confident hope. For

instance, in concluding his lecture on "God and the Spirit of Man,"

he said, "Something is taking place in the depths that as yet needs

no name. To-morrow even it may happen that it will be beckoned to

from the heights, across the heads of the earthly archons. The

eclipse of the light of God is no extinction; even to-morrow that

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[52]Martin Buber, Eclipse of God, (New York: Harper and Bros.,
1952), p. 128.

which has stepped in between may give way."[53] What can be the basis

for such hope? How can one expect that the barriers to dialogue will

truly be reckoned with and overcome?

Buber has not been a dreamer. Much earlier, in his I and Thou,

he drew a clear picture of the power of It and wondered, "How can the

ruined power in a being to enter into relation be raised again? How

does a being gather itself together that is madly and unceasingly

hunted in an empty circle by the separated I?"[54] The answer is one

of faith, one that declares that such emptiness and despair as now is

the lot of the non-dialogical man is the soil from which both self-

destruction and rebirth arise. And from it will come the "beginning

of the reversal." Buber is convinced that deeply in every man, lead-

ing a kind of subterranean or canceled existence, is a surge toward

communion, and that it will be recalled to actuality. That it cannot

be utterly destroyed.[55] One who stands with another who is "shudder-

ing" at the reality of his alienation, who has turned toward him to

shudder with him, may "midwife" the becoming of genuine dialogue as

it comes to birth.

What, then, is dialogue? For the purpose of this paper, keep-

ing in the background all that has been presented thus far, dialogue

is viewed as the ultimately significant engagement of two or more

persons in a mutual relationship enabled by a desire for relation, by

acts of inclusion and confirmation of one another, and resulting in

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[53]Ibid.   [54]Buber, I and Thou, p. 58.

[55]Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 96.

the <u>development</u> <u>of</u> <u>a</u> <u>shared</u> <u>world</u> <u>of</u> <u>co-personal</u> <u>meaning</u>, <u>including</u> the <u>acceptance</u> <u>of</u> <u>responsibility</u> <u>to</u> <u>and</u> <u>for</u> <u>one</u> <u>another</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>world</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>affirmation</u> <u>that</u> <u>they</u> <u>stand</u> <u>singly</u> <u>and</u> <u>together</u> <u>before</u> <u>God</u> <u>who</u> <u>calls</u> <u>them</u> <u>into</u> <u>relational</u> <u>being</u>.

III. DIALOGUE AS FUNCTION

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that dialogue may be viewed as ministry, but that its essential nature is much more. The "much more" has been the topic of the first two Sections, "Dialogue as Primal Relation," and "Dialogue as Concrete Reality." In my view it is absolutely mandatory that dialogue be understood as the expression of the end or goal of life together. Then, it is legitimate to consider dialogue as means, as function, as ministry. Dialogue as a means will lead to a life of dialogue, to relation with God and between persons. The function of dialogue is to create dialogue. Perhaps some will object to the use of dialogue in such a comprehensive way. But in this chaotic world I prefer it as the primary category which gives meaning to my life and to what occurs around me.

The helping ministry which dialogue becomes is <u>The Miracle of Dialogue</u> which Reuel Howe affirms. Dialogue functions as that spirit of love that accepts other people as they are and creates true Christian community. Dialogue is the medium of Ross Snyder's <u>The Ministry of Meaning</u>, and the fundamental principle of Martin Buber's "Education of Character." Dialogue is <u>for</u> something, as well as <u>becoming</u> something.

To enlarge upon the meaning of dialogue as an educational function we will consider the following emphases: 1) communicating, 2) teaching how life is lived, 3) developing trust, 4) creating a co-personal world of meaning, 5) group life, 6) understanding dialogue as a Christian relation and act.

Communicating

Group life, if it is to move from chaotic thrown togetherness or mere collectivity to community, requires the skills of communication. Snyder calls this one of the disciplined functions necessary, "Two-act communication."[56] By this is meant speech and the use of language in its most comprehensive sense. (The head of the Oregon State University speech department is the chief trainer for "sensitivity groups" in the area.)

Snyder considers two functions of communication in his paper on "A Theory of Group Dynamics."[57] One is that each member of the group "expresses his idea and feeling in such a way that they can be understood and appropriated by the other members. (This means with clarity, power, and in such non-threatening manner that other members will not automatically become defensive and therefore unable to understand.)" The discipline here suggested is the offering of self in such a way that others may receive. The giving. The presenting.

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[56]Ross Snyder, "A Theory of Group Dynamics," Religious Education. XLVI: 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1951).

[57]Ibid.

Usually this is what we mean when we say, "he is communicating." Being before others in dialogical relation, as distinct from being there in monologue, facilitates the communication even of the strongest held doctrines and values by persons who are "authorities", as well as it facilitates the stumbling, emerging tentative thoughts of the neophyte. Those who talk a lot need to learn to talk so that others will listen; those who grope for words to signify their as yet unborn meanings need to learn to offer their groping as a gift to the others.

The second communication function is listening. It is receiving. Accepting. Snyder probes the depths of listening as he says that each member of the group is to "store in his mind-emotions the ideas, feelings, goals of every other member." Listening occurs from "experiencing the other side," and is the "becoming aware" which Buber speaks of. Listening sets the stage for responding and for bringing into being the meaning offered by the other person. The skill of listening for this purpose is perhaps the most neglected skill of our time, and needs to be learned not only by the teacher but taught to the student.

The language of communication is the carrier of meaning between persons. Skill in its use does not necessarily mean the learning of "words" but the learning of the give and take of meaning. Buber signifies the role of language in dialogue, saying that in our life with men

>...language is consummated as a sequence, in speech and counter-speech.....Only here does the primary word go backwards and forwards in the same form, the word of address and the word

of response live in the one language, I and Thou take their
stand not merely in relation, but also in the solid give-and-
take of talk. The moments of relation are here, and only here,
bound together by means of the element of the speech in which
they are immersed. Here what confronts us has blossomed into
the full reality of the Thou. Here alone, then, as reality that
cannot be lost, are gazing and being gazed upon, knowing and
being known, loving and being loved.[58]

The educator, by careful attention to language skills, as developed

in the dialogical setting, serves the ministry of meaning.

Teaching How Life is Lived

The educator stands before the student, the minister of mean-

ing before the learner of meaning, as a paradigm through whom will be

revealed concretely the reality of dialogue. Buber has seen the need

for Single One's to bring into being more Single Ones, for only in

this way can responsible life in the community be renewed. The

educator is one who himself knows life in its fullest as dialogue, as

well as in its emptiness as monologue. He knows the darkness and the

light. In him "the word has from time to time become life, and this

life is teaching."[59] Life is teaching, not merely ideas. Therefore,

when the educator presents himself before the student, intending to

be a minister of meaning for him, he does so "to teach them not what

is and must be, but how life is lived in the spirit, face to face with

the Thou. That is, (he is) ready on every occasion to become Thou

for them, and open up the world of Thou."[60]

Such an educator is "really there" for the other, not only in

his being but also in his convictions. It must not be assumed that

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[58]Buber, I and Thou, pp. 102-103.   [59]Ibid., p. 42.   [60]Ibid.

dialogue means simple adjustment to one another. Far from it! Dialogue is nearly always on the verge of crisis. Dialogue is on the frontier of one's feelings, on the "edge of the edge." It is at the place and moment where happenings begin. Therefore, to be "really there" allows the learner to engage with the educator's being and thought, even at the risk of killing the dialogue of the moment. The learner, confronted by one who is fully present to him, and struggling to find in himself the adequate responses to the Present One, is learning the skill of being present to another himself.

He is also learning the skill of being a Single One, affirmed in his own being and ready to affirm the being of others, feeling responsible before God and responsible to others.

> That the men with whom I am bound up in the body politic and with whom I have directly or indirectly to do, are essentially other than myself, that this one or that one does not have merely a different mind, or way of thinking or feeling, or a different conviction or attitude, but has also a different perception of the world, a different recognition and order of meaning, a different touch from the regions of existence, a different faith, a different soil: to affirm all this, to affirm it in the way of a creature, in the midst of the hard situations of conflict, without relaxing their real seriousness, is the way by which we may officiate as helpers in this wide realm entrusted to us as well, and from which alone we are from time to time permitted to touch in our doubts, in humility and upright investigation, on the other's 'truth' or 'untruth', 'justice' or 'injustice'.[61]

To this kind of helping relation we are led, not by any intention to "teach the other what I know," but, as Buber says, by our "steady experiencing of the life-substance of the other as other, and still more by (our) cries and overcoming of them which rises out of

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[61]Buber, Between Man and Man, pp. 61f.

the organic depths." The "life" which is taught by dialogue is not a surface existence, but one which plumbs the depths for its meanings. It happens when the educator truly stands over-against the other while affirming the other in his full humanity.

Developing Trust

When the educator is truly present to the learner, and continues faithfully to remain present in spite of all the barriers of communication thrown up within himself and by the other, he engenders a sense of trust. "Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists--that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education."[62]

Without trust dialogue will be broken off. Suspicion on the part of the learner that the educator is hiding again behind his personal defenses, playing a false role, acting from the impulse of his own anxieties, will result in aggression or retreat. It will reverse the engagement into a monologue.

All such engagements, necessarily, must flow back and forth from monologue to dialogue. This is, to put it bluntly, the way things are in human relationships. Trust, however, will enable both partners to move again toward dialogue after a breakdown has occurred. And how joyful is the educator who discovers that finally he is not the only one responsible for initiating the renewed relation! When the other has enough trust in him to try again.

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[62]Ibid., p. 98.

Creating a Co-personal World of Meaning.

The educator-learner relation is decidedly one-sided, in spite of the goal of genuine mutuality. So it should be. For the educational function is not best served by reciprocal inclusion of each other. The educator uses all of his perceptive powers to become aware of and "include" the learner within his world. He is intent upon "experiencing the other side." The learner, however, is less motivated and less able to work at the task of maintaining a mutual relation. Indeed, he is learning, but the burden is most heavily laid upon the educator. The educator has a very definite role, even in the most democratic of situations.

In addition to his role as initiator of dialogue, the educator is chiefly responsible for introducing into the conversation of the dialogue what we may call his " selections from the world of meaning."[63] He calls forth, by his "beginning questions" the meanings already present among the learners. He chooses those meanings which are currently available in their common experience for exploration. He brings to the conversation the meanings that arise in the lives of the great dialogical characters, pointing to the person who has truly "lived."[64] He points to the culture meanings of other "worlds" which may have importance to his students, and with hermeneutical skill sets them to the task of translating and correlating.[65] As the initiator and helper in the learning process, the educator is the "person who

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[63]Ibid., p. 102. [64]Ibid., p. 89.

[65]Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue, p. 42.

can sense where and in what form the meaning now is, and by his caring effort to understand it as it is emerging, helps it gain courage to become its next and clearer form.[66]

It is very true that both parties in the educational dialogue have resources to bring, perhaps more than they are aware of. It is the educator's function to see that these resources are tapped, especially those that come from the life experience of the student. The meanings which the educator brings to the conversation will have no relevance until they are linked with those of the learner; in fact, they will not really become his meanings. Rather, they will enkindle, like spontaneous combustion, within the "mind-emotions" of the student, meanings of his own, perhaps vastly different from those of the educator, yet real and valid for him. Snyder reminds us that "we cannot give another person a meaning. It arises in him."

True to his function as an enabler of co-personal meanings, the educator may initiate the dialogue in various ways. Snyder suggests three styles of conversation.[67] 1) Midwife, or attendant, whose chief function is to facilitate the becoming of whatever meaning appears as important to the other. The basic question is "has anything happened recently that you have strong feelings about?" His style is that of the developing listener, who is quiet most of the time but ready to reflect upon and respond to whatever is presented, but very briefly. He seeks to help the other clarify and amplify his own

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[66]Snyder, The Ministry of Meaning, p. 22.

[67]Ibid., pp. 27-29.

meaning, perhaps to the point where the other is able to make decisions and act upon the now fulfilled meaning which he has been struggling with. 2) <u>Mating</u>, or co-creation. Both partners become mutually responsible for developing the meaning inherent in the conversation. Here the address and response are shared; questions, examples, criticisms, clarifications are carried out by both parties. The educator, who still has a predominant role, exercises his role by helping the other to bring into the conversation all that he can in response to the topic. He may, in fact, give instructions on how and what might be done by the student to make the creation of meaning a work of partnership. 3) Diving, or offering of a topic of conversation by one person, with participation by the other in order to clarify its meaning and import. The chief purpose here is to translate the meaning of one life and world to the life and world of the student. It requires careful attention to the skill of listening (as before defined) on the part of the student. The educator, who presents the selected material, who "dives," also needs to enable the student to grasp the meaning. He does so by "checking" with him in various ways concerning his response to that which is presented. It is in this way that dialogical education calls upon the rich resources of heritage and culture.

Group Life

Dialogue as a way of meaningful personal relation is the spiritual dynamic and the norm of redemptive group life. Though our purpose here is not to develop a major theory of "dialogical groups," it

is important to indicate that in the ministry of ethical meanings educational and counseling groups of various kinds will often be the operational settings for teaching-learning. Therefore, we will point to the function of dialogue in the redemptive group, the group which is "an insistent invitation toward becoming MAN," as Snyder has described it.[68]

First, it should be emphasized that our study of dialogue as concrete reality is applicable to personal relations in the group. My own personal experience suggests to me that dialogue may occur more easily in groups than in one-to-one meetings for many people. Within the group one finds that he is confronted on many sides by The Address and that Meeting may occur between various members and sometimes in the group as a whole. In the group the dialogical conversation frees one from his normal facade and allows him to trust and to be trustworthy, to include others and to allow himself to be included. In the group the breakdown of dialogue is often quite evident, and with the faith and re-direction provided by some members, renewal may occur, perhaps at a "deeper" and more personal level than before.

Second, dialogue as a function of ministry is applicable to groups. That is, one who is concerned for a ministry of meaning, one who is dedicated to teaching, will find that true dialogue in educational groups is indespensible. In a dialogical group there will be

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[68]Ross Snyder, "The Christian Life is Group Life," (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, n. d.) (Mimeographed.)

clear and powerful expression of ideas as well as sensitive, accepting listening. There will be a concerted effort by all in the group to seek the meanings which lie under the words expressed, meanings which give clues to the nature of the speaker as well as to the message of the speech. The dialogical group, inasmuch as it fulfills its purpose, will discover that all are teachers and all are learners. Each becomes responsible, within the life-setting of the group, to be an example of authentic humanity, and to bring into fulfillment the potential of his fellows.

To trust the group members: this is the most challenging of tasks. For in it's accomplishment may be the germ of trust for oneself and the world. The power-structure of the group may complicate and facilitate such trust. If those with authority (whether given or acquired) squelch the open expression of feelings, then distrust will prevail. If, however, the powerful figures in the group allow, enable, persons to be open about themselves and each other, trust will emerge. Often, with only the tacit or meagre support of but one other member, a person will risk his own sense of security and expose to the group an aspect of his own life and meaning. If the group members, in their various responses to such a revelation, accept it as a trust, they will be preparing the way for a full mutuality and thus allow the members to deal with issues of ultimate importance. Without the trust of dialogue a group will never leave the primary relation of I-It to enter the primary relation of I-Thou.

The dialogical function of developing a "co-personal world of meaning" does not mean group agreement on the use of terms or on the

interpretation of shared experience. Rather, the group members bring to the others their own meanings, they enter a co-personal relation with each other, and they apprehend "from the other side" the meaning of the experience "for him" as well as "for me." Following a significant shared event members of a dialogical group have a unique facility for knowing what that event has meant to one another. They would be able to distinguish with some accuracy the ways in which each person experienced and interpreted the event. For although each person is a group member he is only a member as a Single One; he is uniquely capable of standing spart and also with the group. When, in dialogue, group members recognize, accept, confirm each other as Single Ones, then the group is being redemptive.

Dialogue as a Christian Act

The life of dialogue is not uniquely Christian. It is not a quality of human relationship available only to those who share the faith-community of Christianity. However, it is an utterly human relation, the very fabric of human existence, woven out of the innumerable meetings of persons with God and with one another. A Christian will find, if he enters upon the way of dialogue, that he is in fact entering upon the Way of Jesus Christ. For here the Spirit pervades all relation, and here the person not only meets God but becomes the answerable, responsible, ethical man.

Herbert Braun, while not framing his theology by explicity dialogical concepts, has shown that the relation of man with man is the source of our relation with God. His conclusion to the essay, "The

Problem of a New Testament Theology," draws together in a succinct manner his understanding of God.[69] Without tracing the premises upon which Braun bases his argument, let us look at this conclusion which bears so importantly on our theme. For Braun, God is not to be "understood as one existing for himself." Rather, God is, or the word "God" means, "the whence of my being agitated." This "whence" is not merely some outer or inner power but has for me a definite meaning. That meaning is termed by Braun as "the 'I may' and 'I ought'," or the determination of my being "by being taken care of" and "by obligation." Now the point that is important to the dialogical theme is this: "Being taken care of and obligation...do not approach me from the universe, but from another, from my fellow man. The word of proclamation and the act of love reach me--if they do reach me--from my fellow man. God is the whence of my being taken care of and of my being obliged, which comes to me from my fellow man."

Hence, being answerable, responsible, ethical, means being in relation with one's fellow man in a way which is ultimately significant, in a way which relates one, as I personally would say, to God. That significant way of relation is the dialogical relation.

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[69]Herbert Braun, "The Problem of a New Testament Theology," Journal for Theology and the Church, I (1965), 182-183 for all quotations herein.

CHAPTER VII

THE MINISTRY OF ETHICAL MEANINGS

The ambiguity of the term "ethical meanings" is self-evident.

However, though one cannot satisfactorily define a "meaning", it is

possible to indicate just how "meaning" is being used in this study.

Then it will be necessary to outline the specific contents of ethical

meanings and place them within the function of dialogical ministry.

Meanings

A single-phrase definition of "meanings" as we are using it

might be this: meanings are the cognitive contents of dialogue. They

are the emergent feelings, the interpreted experiences, the patterned

images, the rational ideas, which begin to serve a person as mental

tools for the task of interpreting and responding to "what is going

on."

Ross Snyder suggests something of a definition of "meaning"

when he writes,

> Meaning emerges when we not only participate in an event but
> also take an attitude toward it. An event has meaning to the
> extent that it enlivens or deadens the self and what it cares
> for. This is why interest is so crucial in all education. The
> student must feel "this has to do with me--and with the movement
> of life I am part of." The meaning is not in the event or fact,
> but in what events and information do to the person's own
> organization of meanings.[1]

As we have previously noted, Snyder speaks of meaning as the kind of

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[1] Ross Snyder, "Christianity and Young People," in Albert H. van
den Heuvel (ed.), The New Creation and the New Generation (New York:
Friendship Press, 1965), p. 41.

emergent understanding by which we "design a world which tells us what this "home territory" of our life is. And when to run, submit, or live with."[2]

Meanings do not "go with" every event, though every event has a language which purports to communicate "what it means." So we can say that, for me, the event of the crucifixion of Christ has no meaning, even though there are countless standard words and concepts and books that are given to me to "let me in on the meaning." I do not get "let in", I do not apprehend, until by some existential involvement in the event of the cross itself I am able to say, "Aha, now I know what you mean!" Doctrines, rehearsed responses, traditions, language itself all intend to convey meaning, but the reality they intend to convey is not my meaning until it speaks of my personal experience and my apprehension of my experience in the light of the larger relationships I have with the rest of my world. Further, it is not my meaning until because of it I have taken a stance in regard to what it is speaking about. It is not my meaning until I am prepared to be accountable for it and ready to speak it in my being and my relationships with others.

Meanings, then, have an inherent ethical quality. They are morally significant. They are not neutral facts, but interpretations of facts with the purpose of designing a patterned organization of facts that will enable me to effect what we can only call appropriate responses. Ethical meanings are those especially significant interpretations which, when adopted or confirmed, speak the truth about

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[2]Cf., supra, p. 138.

what is going on and how this has to do with me. Ethical meanings are my own personal comprehension of my self, my peers, my community from the point of view of my responsibility to them, and of their responsibility to me. Ethical meanings are those meanings that _focus on the impact of relationships_. They take account of the fact of relation and the consequences of relation. Moreover, they are "ethical" because they are the result of reflection on the "good-forness" of the relation.

Dialogue concerning ethical meanings may often begin at the very concrete, experiencial level: what is happening? This means, for one thing, an accounting of behavior, a story of what occurred between persons, an explanation of events. But as the dialogue proceeds, and as mutuality enhances a sense of trust, those involved soon begin to move to a deeper level. They see "what is happening" from various perspectives. Dialogue on what is happening takes them into consideration of the needs that are being met (psychosocial development), into an awareness of historical dimensions and how the "happening" fits in, into an awareness of the inter-relatedness of life and of consequences. Underlying the dialogue, and sometimes openly acknowledged, is the "depth of meaning" which links this particular happening with the ultimate relation of man with God. Every ethical meaning, if its full import is explored, emerges as a meaning of ultimate significance. For in that meaning "I am shown who I am" and "I am shown to whom I am accountable." A ministry of ethical meanings seeks to "reach the depths" so that the practical concerns which may have initiated the dialogue in the first place may be reflected in the light of the ultimate concern.

The Contents of Ethical Meanings

A survey of the previous chapters of this study would demon-
strate that each chapter has suggested a particular set of ethical
meanings. That is, they indicate what has been ethically meaningful
for them! Tillich stresses, within his all-inclusive ontology, the
finely balanced relationships between structure and dynamic, between
freedom and destiny, between present actuality and potential being,
between love as agape and love as eros. In all he seeks to interpret
the ultimacy of morality as the demand in all being for self-actual-
ization. Thus, we get from Tillich a "grand design," a total view into
which every part is supposed to fit.

Biblical theology, especially that of the "new hermeneutic"
variety, in its intense effort to translate the "meanings" of the
Bible into terms that will enable us to be "let in on them," has turned
to the realm of the ethical as the most immediately communicative. We
may not be able to understand what lies behind all the doctrines and
symbols given to us in the Scriptures, but we do most assuredly under-
stand what it means to be a man among men. We may not appreciate the
Scriptural meaning of "a God out there who gives us commands," but we
readily respond to that Scriptural meaning of "life together as persons
who are accountable." And we discover that the fact of accountability
spoken of by the Scripture is the very same fact of accountability
known in our experience. And more than this, we discover that a rad-
ical relation to the One to whom we are accountable releases in us
powers of response that enable us to become more "truly human" in our
relationships with the gifts of persons, time and world that has been

given to us by our Creator. Thus, we get from Ebeling in particular
a restatement of the meaning of the Word of God which comes to us in
the common events of life and communicates to us, not "God" but the
Gospel of God, the good news which generates life and the good news
which demands morally responsible action, the word _from_ God.

The ethical implications of Erikson's personality development
theory have already been delineated to some extent. The psychoanalyst
has not addressed himself to ontological designs or to theology as
such. (Yet both are somewhat obvious in his writings). Significant
ethical meanings have emerged in his sweeping analysis of the epi-
genetic stages of man. Erikson brings to us a clear vision of the
personal roots of ethical meanings. He sees ethical meanings from the
side of what the person brings to the events, and also sees how signif-
icant relations between persons and social institutions bring to birth
not only the various elements of personality, but also the interpre-
tative meanings which are useful as ideologies and frames of refer-
ence. Thus, we get from Erikson a view which says that ethical mean-
ings have especial appropriateness when related to the stage of life
in which one is at present developing.

What is ethically meaningful to H. R. Niebuhr? What is the
thrust of his message to us? Like Tillich, Niebuhr seeks an ontolog-
ical design for his total view. However, instead of finding his value
center in the power of being itself, Niebuhr finds it in the relation
of being with being. Therefore, he has elaborated a relational value
theory in which the self, or person, finds its value by being in a
positive other-enhancing relation with another self. A person is

valuable, has worth, because he is worth something to another person, to put it crudely. In such an ontology God is the Center of value, the One who by being _for_ all creation and by being _for_ all men, is our ultimate criterion of what is worthwhile. Niebuhr's hermeneutic theory, shaped by this relational perspective, interprets the Scripture in a manner much like that of Ebeling. The clue to ethical meaning in the Scripture is not "what did God tell us to do?" but rather "what did God do himself?" When we receive and accept the message about what God did, and also is now doing in his world, then we _respond to God_, not to God's demands. As a matter of fact, the explicit statements of God's demands may not fit at all today. Our response is to be such that we are faithfully obedient to God, even as Jesus Christ was obedient to God. Thus, we get from Niebuhr a paradigm of the Christian life: the responsible self.

Martin Buber, though speaking from the Jewish tradition, has been a "teacher" of all of the others we have been considering. Though there is no "Buber school of thought" and few Buber disciples, the insights of this dialogical man have penetrated deeply into the heart of modern Christian theology. The ethical meanings which have power for him are those which interpret the dynamic, the breakdown, and the renewal of the life of dialogue. For, in his view dialogue is not just a style of conversation; it is a way of existence in community. Thus, from Buber we get a vision of an ethical style which enhances the development of the Single One, the person-in-relation.

Dialogical Ministry

Our review of the principal authors who have served as resources in this study has pointed to the fact that they have ethical meanings which are important for them. In the relevant chapters we have outlined specifically the content of those meanings. Now, without repeating the details already given, we will turn to a consideration of the ministry of ethical meanings. We will keep in mind what our authors have given us as part of the "content" of dialogue to be engaged in with other people.

Three areas of meanings, or kinds of approaches to a ministry of meanings, are suggested to us by Ross Snyder.[3] They seem particularly apt ways of organizing our problem. 1.) Existence Questions, 2.) Paradigms of Human Experience, 3.) Life-world or Ideology.

1.) Existence Questions. Basic questions about identity can be the beginning of a dialogue driving to the heart of an ethical issue. Snyder offers a few:

> To what can I be true?
> What is the truth I am meant to be?
> What objects and events tell me the kind of person I really am?
> What does being "with" a person mean?
> How can I work through my guilt? My powerlessness?
> What story of life enables me to make sense out of what
>   happens to me through the years?
> How can I become a person individualized from all my "parents"?
> Against what do I rebel? So what?
> Am I a manly man (womanly woman)?
> What is the new possibility, in this moment of history, into
>   which I can put my life?
> How can I represent an eternal meaning?
> How are God and I related?[4]

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[3]Snyder, op. cit., pp. 42-46.   [4]Ibid., p. 43.

One recognizes that these "questions" are not the sort that are always on the lips of people, including youth. But Snyder notes that their lives are asking them, even if their lips can not, "and their styles of life are fashioned by the implicit answers that are residues of the everyday events and choices of their lives."[5] How the questions do come up to the cognitive level and become material for dialogue can be illustrated by an example or two.[6]

Jerry: Without a Cause

The high school youth group was deeply engrossed in a discussion about the root meaning of vocation. The idea of a divine calling to a particular style of life or a particular job just didn't seem to fit in with the world-view of most in the group. Life-styles or jobs were things that "just happen" or at the most things that you can make happen if you are really motivated. Yet, when the group began to consider how God may call, in the needs of man, for instance, more interest was aroused. At this point Jerry, a senior boy now in his last month at high school, with obvious release of tension and emotion, said to everyone in the group, "I never heard God call me....And if he's going to call, he'd better hurry up about it. It's almost too late!" The discussion now turned into a search for meaning and something to be loyal to right now.

Steve: Diffused Identity

As a paper-boy Steve was great. Sometimes his mother had to prod him into getting out to collect, but most often he was quite responsible. Through the junior-high and senior-high years he had developed a reputation as a good worker. At school, however, the situation was quite different. Tests showed him to be average in ability, but his performance was quite poor. He seldom completed his work. Thus, in his senior year of high school Steve coped out, he gave up. Suspension for inexcused absenses brought on a crisis and near expulsion. But now, suddenly, people began to "pay attention" to Steve. His parents, counselor, minister, boss. The result was confirming to him, so that now he was ready to talk. The subject: who was Dave? Where was he going? What

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[5]Ibid.   [6]Based on personal experiences.

was his picture of himself (stimulated by a picture drawing session)? What was he becoming? What was his future? A boy who had seldom been able to find words to talk about himself as one who is "worth talking about" began to try.

Diane: Projected Identity

After the meeting at church Diane hung around the office, then sat down listlessly while I cleaned off my desk. She was extremely uncomfortable, nervously shifting her body and wringing the edge of a scarf. After a bit, when the place settled down she spilled her problem without coaxing. "No one likes me." As the conversation proceeded it became evident that this was not merely a passing sense of rejection, but a deep sense of disgust. And, in succeeding sessions it was revealed that though other people had indeed occasionally shown dislike for her, she really "disliked herself." As a foster child she just could not believe, as she expressed it, that anyone else could like her. The following conversations began to build on her new insight, as she learned to accept the fact of her existence as a foster child who was indeed liked and appreciated by many people.

Snyder suggests that one way to bring up Existence Questions is to explore meanings by the use of metaphor. In this case, as distinct from the previous illustrations in which a student initiated the dialogue, the teacher is the initiator. Snyder sees metaphors as primary modes of communication, in which persons are themselves present, in which there is a "unified complexity," in which there is expressed the "mixed tensions of life." In his own metaphorical way of writing, Snyder summarizes the usefulness of this method of dialogue: "...the metaphor work of the mind enables us to suddenly realize what our existence situation is. We have talked about it often, but now it all comes together and springs into our consciousness kicking our awareness. Our lived life suddenly steps up to testify how it is with us. With power drawn from the depths, focused, we recover our center. We have

an identity."[7]

Samples of metaphorical Existence Questions which Snyder gives include:

Compared with my parents I am.....
The life of the mind is like.....
At my best I am like.....
At my worst I am like.....
The future is like.....
Rebelling against authority is like.....
Loneliness is like.....
Backing down when I know I'm right is like.....
Trying to be a Christian in today's world is like.....
Being a woman/man in today's world is like.....
Being understood by somebody else is like.....
Being helpless; knowing that nothing you can do will make
    any difference, is like.....

2.) **Paradigms** **of** **human** **experience**. Dialogue is not usually an occasion for the analysis of experience, though at times it may move in that direction. Rather, it tends to see life whole, to find the unities and relationships. Sometimes a dialogue can begin at this point, by looking at a whole life, by reflecting on the life-style of one who has been integral, a New Being, a responsible self. Snyder indicates the potential meaning such paradigms may have, "In a way, they are the core moralities. They have been tested through time; they are characteristic of a people of God but must be freshly 'translated' into the new deeds and culture forms of each generation. So together, and in conversation, we need to develop with young people comprehension of such Christian paradigm experiences as compassion, covenant, justice, the holy, the Holy Spirit, rebirth, love, I-Thou,

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[7]Ross Snyder, The Ministry of Meanings (Geneva: World Council of Churches and World Council of Christian Education, 1965), p. 61.

communication, and the striving for authenticity."[8]

The materials for such paradigms of experience are numerous. They should be "contemporary," that is, speak to people in their condition today. St. Augustine's Confessions offer opportunities for many kinds of insights. The following illustrations are paraphrases of some incidents recalled by Augustine in Book I, Chapters 18 and 19. The material is paraphrased in order to make the meanings more available to young people.[9]

Words Kill, Too

Look at us, Lord, and please be patient! See how some people try so hard to speak the right words, but don't care about right actions? Tragic, isn't it? They strain to follow the Tiniest rule of grammar, made up by men, but ignore the rule of salvation made up by You. See how ridiculous! If a man says "uman being" without saying the "h" just right he seems to offend people more than if he, a human being, were to hate another human being! Again, a man wants to have a reputation as a big talker. He gets into fierce debates, everyone watching. What happens? He is so careful to keep his tongue from slipping that he doesn't watch out for his slipping character, and he cuts down another man with his words and makes him out as an enemy even of his own friends.

I Have Been A Fraud!

That is the kind of person I was becoming! Lord, I confess it. I wanted to be applauded by them! I wanted to please them! I just didn't see how, following them, I was losing You. You must have been very disappointed in me, I wasn't even honest with my friends. I lied to my teachers and parents, just for fun! I wanted to play, to be "where the action is." I wanted to imitate the adults. I stole from my parents' room. Why? Not because I really needed the stuff. I wanted to treat my friends so they would play with me. And then when they did play, and while they

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[8]Snyder, "Christianity and Young People," pp. 43-44.

[9]From church school curriculum material now in preparation by the author.

were having fun with me, I tried to win by cheating. I wanted so
much, and so vainly, to be "first." I was violent when cheated
by others, but when caught myself I quarreled and refused to
admit my crime.

So this is the innocence of childhood? No, Lord, No! Have
mercy on me! As we grow older our sins are just the same. We
grow from children into politicians and teachers! Our toys,
which once were simple things like marbles and balls and the
birds we liked to tease, become the playthings of gold and lands
and people!

Certain instructions help the students to prepare for dialogue
with the paradigm-experience material as the focus:[10]

Read it and mark it up as follows -

1. Star the one sentence that is its main message.
    What experience of yours does it connect with?

2. Underline two other sentences that say something to you.
    If possible, recall the feeling it aroused in you, the
    'picturing' that went on in your mind.

3. Put a question mark beside anything he says that give you
    this reaction: "What could he possibly mean here and
    why would he say it?"

In a sermon on the letters of Jeremiah, Martin Luther spoke of

Christian freedom in a way that can be used as a paradigm. Like the

selections from Augustine, we have paraphrased Luther's remarks.

"A Christian is a Strange Bird!"

Why? Consider freedom. Who knows what it is? Most people say
freedom means having a free body, being able to do what you feel
like. The Christian says "No." Freedom means having a free
conscience and soul! First of all, a Christian knows that he
does not have a pure conscience. He never is really right with
God. Yet, he becomes pure and right and happy--his conscience
becomes free--through Christ Jesus alone. Being free, then, he
is able to freely do good. Now that's real freedom!

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[10]Snyder, The Ministry of Meaning, pp. 90-91.

Such a reading of Luther will have much more meaning when set in a story that reveals some of his own personal struggles and his battle for the freedom of his soul.

Paradigms of human experience may enter the dialogue from many different sources. A photograph that "tells a whole story," a short and poignant biography, a single question, a provocative statement; anything that catches the meaning of life as it is and let's one into its meaning can be useful. Ultimate concerns are disclosed in such paradigms, if in dialogue the meanings are allowed to come into the light. A sense of accountability, of relation, of destiny, becomes the topic of discussion.

In the secular world of today, where men appear to direct their lives without reference to God or to ultimate values, the longing for a depth of meaning is apparent everywhere. In the Youth Culture its new spokesmen are the modern style balladiers: The Beatles. Following the trend to touch on life from a "sick" perspective and to glory in the nonhero, the Beatles quite often betray a longing for ideals and identity. In recent years that longing has become a more mature poetry which, when joined to their unique musical style, communicates not sickness and death but a reaching out for health. Listening to their music, and dialogue about "what it means" can be enlightening for youth and adults. Consider this piece by John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

NOWHERE MAN

He's a real Nowhere Man,
Sitting in his Nowhere Land,
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.

Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to,
Isn't he a bit like you and me?
Nowhere Man please listen,
You don't know what you're missing,
Nowhere Man.
The world is at your command.
He's as blind as he can be,
Just sees what he wants to see,
Nowhere Man can you see me at all?
Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to,
Isn't he a bit like you and me?
Nowhere Man don't worry,
Take your time, don't hurry,
Leave it all
Till somebody else lends you a hand.
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.

Then, out of this same group of singers comes a song like the

following, written by George Harrison.

WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU

We were talking--about space
between us all
And the people--who hide themselves
behind a wall of illusion
Never glimpse the truth--then it's far
too late--when they pass away.
We were talking--about the love we all
could share--when we find it
To try our best to hold it there--with
our love
With our love--we could save the world
--if they only knew.
Try to realize it's all within yourself
no-one else can make you change
And to see you're really only very small,
and life flows on within you and without you.....

Songs, poems, motion pictures, television programs, photographs,

all can bring into the dialogue on ethical meanings a content that

will spur attention to the deeper truths of interpersonal relations.

Scriptural paradigms of great immediacy are the various parables, in

the Old and New Testament. These have a power today which breaks open

the meaning of the biblical message as a whole, and which, with a

minimum of exegetical problems, let a man see himself and his world

"as it is." Some possibilities might include the following:

> Jotham's Parable (Judges 9:7-15), reading it within the context
> of the political conflict and the ultimate values of the contend-
> ing parties.
> The Book of Jonah, possesses numerous possibilities for role-
> analysis, if one lets both the humor and the call to mission
> break through. Jonah and the Lord; Jonah and the sailors; Jonah
> and the people of Ninevah; Jonah and himself.
> The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3),
> and also The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8), reach deeply into the human
> condition with the challenge of the forgiveness of sin.
> The Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-9) urging through a picture of
> a disreputable man, the call for decision.
> Children in the Market Place (Matthew 11:16-19), showing how
> preconceived ideas prevent acceptance of one who brings joy.
> The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14), showing self-
> righteousness and humility, and their relation to a saving power.
> The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), and The Unmerciful Servant
> (Matthew 18:23-35), which indicate the style of response appro-
> priate to one who is responding to God.

The narrative and didactic literature of the Scriptures contain

a wealth of resources for paradigms of human experience as well. In

the use of such materials a dialogical relation between teacher and

student, or among members of a group should be maintained. The

teacher seeks to maintain a spirit of mutuality and takes steps to

insure it; the student learns mutuality "by doing." In the entire

encounter, both are inasmuch as possible "co-creators." The ethical

meanings which emerge from the dialogue may sharpen up or focus those

that are present or inherent in the Scripture; they may apply Scrip-

tural insights to new situations; they may move into tangential areas

of meaning and develop or "create" meanings that are entirely beyond

the scope of the Scripture text itself. Dialogue on a paradigm of human experience may lead one into the creation of ethical meanings "for me," the creation of a "Life-world" or ideology.

3.) <u>Life-world</u> or <u>Ideology</u>. A conscious aim of dialogical teaching is to bring into being meanings that, so far as those involved are concerned, did not exist before. As we have already mentioned, in the previous chapters concerning Tillich, Ebeling, Erikson, Niebuhr and Buber, our conscious purpose has been to enter into dialogue, to move into a listening-responding relation with them, and attempt to reflect in writing what we hear them saying and believe them to be meaning. Not only that, but we have intended to respond, to co-create with them, and thus to grow our own meanings. Thus, our dialogue has resulted in a new expression of our life-world, a conception of ideology which was not handed down to us by tradition, but which "grew up" in our mind as the result of dialogue. What we have done, by reading, intensive study, and participation with others in dialogical sessions concerning this same material (but of course not with the authors personally), is to engage in a personal ministry of ethical meanings, one that has been very real.

The product of dialogue, then, in terms of meanings, is the creation of a new life-world, a new construct of significant facts and relationships, a new sense of how one fits into history and time, a new awareness of the design of the world, a new sense of the ultimacy of intimate relationships. Dialogue, as we have noted, produces other fruit than cognitive meanings. It enables one to manifest the

power of being, to become a Single One, to discover in an intensely

personal way his own accountability before others. In other words,

dialogue enable a man to be a _moral_ _man_, to behave in accordance with

that which is ultimate for him. Dialogue also sparks cognitive mean-

ings, thus enabling man to be an _ethical_ _man_, to know the basis for

his actions, to have an adequate self-understanding. Dialogue, then

in its function of developing the ethical man, sparks the production

of fresh ideologies, world-views that are personal and are worthy of

commitment. Ross Snyder helps to define ideology from this perspec-

tive:

> "Ideology" here does not mean a system of rationalizations
> behind which we hide our real motives and actions--although it
> may become that. Ideology is a view of "a world" coming into
> existence; of a future that is on its way. It is an invitation
> to history making, an invitation to join a rising group of people
> whose destiny is at hand. It speaks of a sharp difference
> between what is and what could be (will be). It's theme is
> "becoming." Instead of describing the present world, it tells
> how the present will change into the new.[11]

Erikson has noted that while early childhood is a time when the

basic ideology of a culture is transmitted to a child, through train-

ing, it is during the stage of youth and the search for identity that

persons begin to look for a cause, something to be for, something to

which one may give allegiance, loyalty, fidelity. Beginning with the

early teen years, then, and continuing through all the stages of adult-

hood, a fruitful dialogical experience will lead to the formation of

ever new life-worlds.

Our study of "The Word of God and Ethical Meanings" noted that

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[11]Snyder, "Christianity and Young People," p. 45.

modern men tend to project a future and move into it, to see a future which will be under their control. In contrast, the eschatological perspective _gives_ a future. The future comes into our immediate present as a gift, with potentialities far beyond the dreams of manipulative man, and with dangers far beyond his fears as well. For Tillich the future means potential being, the dynamic emergence of newness always accompanied by the polar establishment of patterns and structures. What is new is what can be made new, in the movement of man toward self-actualization. Tillich, then, shares the teleological view of Snyder. Ebeling, von Oppen and H. R. Niebuhr, however, see the future as coming, not made. They see it as _giving_ _being_, _not_ _actualizing_ _being_.

Before proceeding with a discussion of the ministry of life-world meanings, we should sharpen up this debate, and place before us the view that H. R. Niebuhr states more explicitly. First, in connection with the paradoxes inherent in teleology (the image of man-the-maker), Niebuhr says the following:

> The theory of teleology, whether Christian or non-Christian, always directs attention to the primacy of the _human_ pursuit of the ideal good. But it remains most difficult to reconcile this with the Christian conviction and experience of the primacy of _God's_ action: in making himself known by the revelation of his goodness rather than allowing himself to be found by search; in giving the faith, the love, and the hope that aspire toward him; in creating and re-creating, making and remaking. There is always a surd, a contradiction, when the image of man-the-maker and the image of God-the-creator and re-creator are combined in one picture.[12]

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[12]H. Richard Niebuhr, _The Responsible Self_, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 134-135.

Then, offering his own view of an eschatological future, and relating it to relational, responsible man, Niebuhr says:

>...the paradox of man-as-maker, dependent on the divine creator, is soluble, I think, when we reflect that all human making is also response to prior action and that the future-directed movement in human life is more eschatological than purely teleological. As eschatological it has a future in view that comes to us more than a future into which we go..... both obedient man and man-the-maker are responders.....[13]

In saying this, however, Niebuhr is not arguing that one way or another is more fruitful as a way of doing ethics.

Any dialogue about the future, about human potentials, about destiny and freedom and justice, then, may be likely to develop both of these basic meanings. Our ministry, as dialogical teachers, is not to encourage one style of meaning while denying the other. Rather, it is to be the "guarantor" of personal meanings for others, meanings that will enable them to depict, shape, design, organize, fit together the pieces of an otherwise fractured scene.

A ministry of life-world meanings goes beyond the stages of talk and into the stages of creative action. It seeks to enable responsiveness and specific creative responses that "speak" the meanings now developing. There are two reasons for this. First, a meaning is not fully available and personal until it has led one to act upon it. Second, a meaning has no "being" until it has found expression in a language, a language of words, of art forms, of love-relation, of social action.

Therefore, the ministry of ethical meanings now seeks ways in

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[13]Ibid., p. 136.

which inherent meanings can come into full birth and continue as live

forces in a person's life. The result is a host of creative acts,

some of which we list here:

- experience the other side, actually listen, promote dialogue
- write a short poem or blank verse, freely expressing the meaning
- paraphrase the text studied in dialogue
- act it out in a role-playing situation
- simulation-research a complex situation with a larger group
- talk the new meaning through with someone; dig for the right words
- engage in a planned group or private action to try it out
- use the new meaning as a criterion for judging other meanings
- create a painting, a symbol, a sculpture that speaks the meaning
- give expression to the meaning in a variety of contexts; try it out on other people.

To create a life-world or ideology, or to develop related mean-

ings for such a life-world, is to establish "closure," to borrow an

expression from gestalt psychology. But the dialogue does not need

to quit. It may continue at a new level, with the new meaning as a

leaping-off point for further exploration. The new meaning, as it

becomes a shared-meaning in a dialogical group, has the power of

establishing continuity and true community. Thus, the life-world is

not a private creation, but a creation of those who stand in dialogical

relation. This is the usual connotation of the word "ideology." An

ideology that is the result of dialogical growth may become a fixed

doctrine. But the aim is to place it within the meaning-world of the

group or community in such a way that it will always be open to new

insights and new dialogical discoveries. Thus, as ethical meanings

take on the character of ethical habits and life-styles they are

subject to revision, not on the basis of contingencies but on the

basis of one's awareness of himself as a moral agent in an interrelated and interdependent community of moral agents.

The ministry of ethical meanings which moves to the creation of life-worlds is illustrated by the following "creations." The first is an attempt we have made recently to "get into the meaning-world" of the junior high student and express an ideology regarding decision. The second is a summary of meanings brought to expression by a pastoral counselor as he confronts modern attitudes toward sex. The third is the narrative account of a church youth group, trying to act on ideals they had been wrestling with in church. The fourth is painful recounting of the meaning of an event by a Catholic priest living in a Black neighborhood.

Decision

Chorus

Decision!
That's what we need.
What is good; what is bad?
What is right; what is wrong?
What is beautiful; what is ugly?
What is worth keeping; what is worthless?
What makes us more humane; what makes us inhuman?
Decision!
That's what we need.
That's what we have to do, if we are going to live.

The Complainer

What?
You want me to decide?
You must be kidding!
I don't decide anything, not on my own.
I'm pushed, shoved, told, bribed.
I'm conditioned, that's it, trained,
Expected to obey like a dog...
That's it, like a dog!
I don't get to make any decisions.
It's "do this, do that" all day.
Everyone else is making the decisions for me!

Chorus
     Everyone makes decisions.
     Even if the decision is to let others
     Decide.

The Complainer
     Sure, others decide for me.
     But I don't let them.
     They have all the power, all the muscle.
     After all, thirteen is young.
     No one pays any attention to me,
     And what I think is right or wrong.
     They just tell me, and I'm supposed to listen.
     So, sometimes they let me choose:
     Big choice!
     Do I want strawberry or vanilla?
     Do I want jelly or jam?
     Do I want to go to the movies or go bowling?
     So, what about the Big decisions?
     Not a chance!

Chorus
     Everyone has the power to choose.
     To make the big decisions.
     It is a gift from God.
     A gift that grows as we grow.
     Decisions, big decisions, are facing us today,
     Now!

The Complainer
     You want me to decide now?
     I can't. It's impossible!
     Everything is too confusing, too messed up,
     Like a new Group,
     Guitars, drums, organ all on their own beat:
     What a noise!
     I can't decide what to do.
     I can't even decide what is right or wrong!
     About all I think about is how to survive,
     How to get along,
     How to live a little, to enjoy today,
     How to make a few plans for tomorrow.
     But the big decisions?
     No, not me.
     I can't make sense of this world.

Chorus
     Decision!
     That's what we need.
     "Once to every man and nation
     Comes the moment to decide..."

We are young,
We are powerless,
We are confused,
But we also are human,
Born in a world where decision means life.
Decision!
That's what we need.

Ethical Meanings During a Sexual Revolution

Wayne E. Oates, in a chapter of his latest book,[14] writes of
his coming to specific ethical meanings, which he proposes as
guidelines or principles, as a "value framework" to be available
in the dialogue of pastoral counseling. Without elaborating them
at all, we can still see how these principles correlate with our
discussion of ethical meanings through dialogue.

1. The principle of "knowness" between men and women.
2. The principle of integrity in relationships as opposed to
deceit and duplicity.
3. The principle of care for the partner as a person as opposed
to the "use" of the partner as a means.
4. The principle of responsibility.
5. The principle of durability.

Invitation to a Party[15]

The group of teen-agers "lounging in front of the cafe across
the street" were all Caucasian. The Baptist and Presbyterian
teen-agers were interested in getting acquainted with them as a
part of the inner city and as young people from a different back-
ground than their own. Some of this "getting acquainted" had
been going on all weekend, but Saturday night they planned to
have a party and to invite these kids into The Point (church
educational center) for a time of playing records and dancing.
Some Negro high school students had seen the Baptist and
Presbyterian young people on their walk that morning and had
come over to The Point asking if they could come to the party,
too. Rev. Larry Black of the Camden Metropolitan Ministry
explained that at an earlier conference the teen-agers had
invited the Negro youth to their party on their morning tour.

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[14]Wayne E. Oates, Pastoral Counseling in Social Problems
(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), pp. 95-102.

[15]Personal correspondence from Barbara Dodge, American Baptist
Home Mission Societies.

When the Negro youth arrived for the party, the Caucasian kids from across the street refused to enter the building. Mr. Black pointed out that if the Negro kids came to this party, the Caucasian kids probably would not. It was up to the group present to decide whether they wanted to limit their party to the group that they had been getting acquainted with or risk alienation from them by inviting the Negro youth. The young people finally decided they could not exclude the Negro youth and that if the Caucasian youth from across the street would not come in, they would go out and see if they could bring them in. As the situation turned out, the discussion lasted so long that the Negro youth finally went home and only the kids from across the street were left for the party. But it was an important decision to the kids and they spent a lot of time discussing it.

"The Uncomfortable Christ"[16]

In that part of Christ's Body called Selma, Alabama, I held the hand of the uncomfortable Christ, that of a minister trembling with fear but bursting with courage. I saw the face of the uncomfortable Christ, that of a boy beaten, scarred externally and internally by the fists of man's hate.....I saw the tears of Christ, those of parents panicked by fear for their children. I heard the cries of Christ, those of a people jeered at, bruised, gassed, and in pain. I saw the blood of Christ, that of a little girl. His blood became her blood as it poured from her head onto the side of my face.

I had found the uncomfortable Christ--the Christ of today is as He ever was. And certainly, He exists all around us.

Each of these illustrations show the creation of a meaningful life-world. They arise out of engagement. And by becoming language-statements, they become ideological elements in a total design of the world as seen by the "speakers." The ministry of ethical meanings moves to this stage of development if it has as its purpose the maturation of persons in free, moral response to the action of God in human community.

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[16]Sermon by Father Maurice Oullet given at St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vermont; quoted in John Cogley, "Religion: Churches and Rights," The New York Times, (Sunday, August 8, 1965), Cf., Oates, op. cit., p. 78.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The secular world is beginning to call forth from the church a secular language. But the meanings conveyed by that language still say the basic words: trust, love, freedom, hope, integrity to mention a few. Not only that. The language of the church points to the ground of all meaning and being, which secular language presupposes but does not often speak. That ground, in Martin Buber's phrase, has suffered an eclipse. The modern language-world, unable to speak of God because of a radical shift in cosmology, has had to endure the "eclipse of God."

That is, some elements of the modern language-world are secular. Scientific, technical, positivistic language has no need of God. Yet, the language of relation speaks the meaning of "God" even though it may not speak his name. It speaks of intimacy, of love, of mercy, of grace, of answerability. Empirical language, applied to human relationships, is a "dead language," and has no sense of the ultimate. Relational or dialogical language, speaking of the meanings discovered in person-to-person meeting, is alive and plunges into the depths of the ultimate. The word that reaches the heart of modern man, so dehumanized by his own sin, the word of salvation, is the word which breaks forth the meaning of the I-Thou relation, and establishes that relation as a way of life. The communication of that Word is the ministry of the Christian Church.

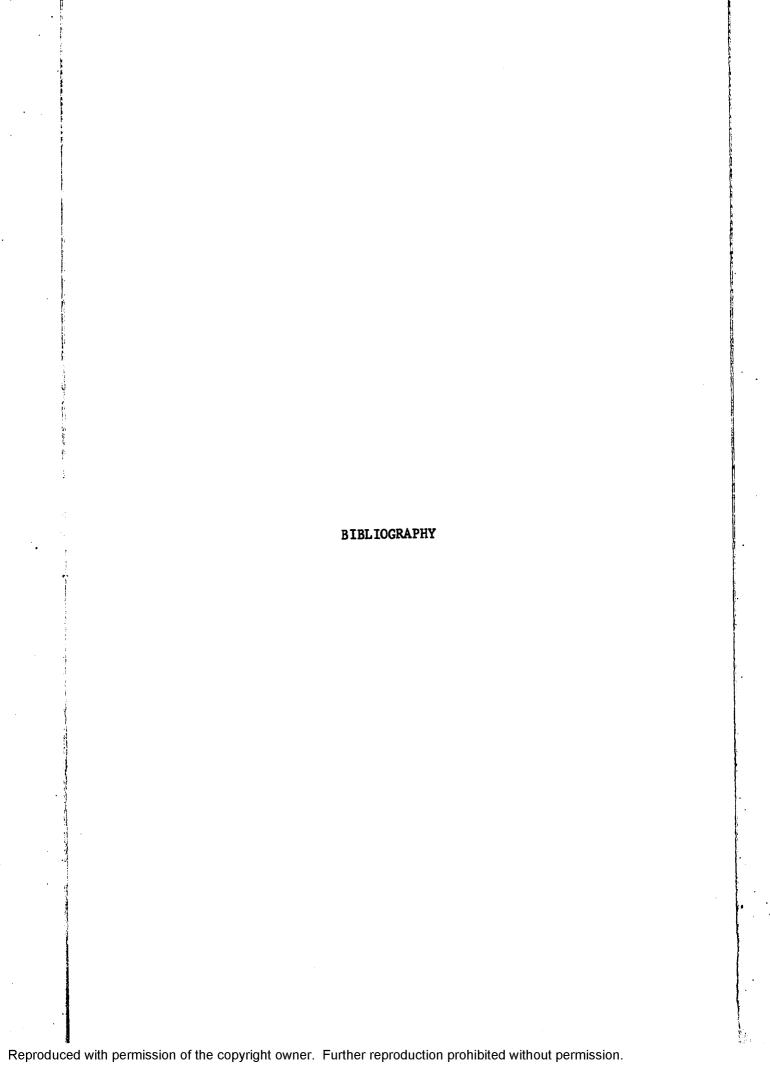In this study of the ministry of meanings, particular stress

has been placed on "ethical meanings." In one sense, the stress may be false. For every "meaning" has moral significance. Yet, as a way of focusing attention on the task of every man to think reflectively on what he is doing, we have designated our theme as one dealing with "ethical meanings," with cognitive learning. In the sense that "ethics" is different from "morals" our stress on "ethical meanings" is well founded.

The Christian teacher or pastor who enters dialogue with another person or participates in a small dialogical group, or seriously endeavors to elicit dialogue with the congregation through his preaching, brings into that dialogue his own resources. These resources have been the subject for the major portion of this study. Not only do they give the minister a life-world or perspective, but they also give him specific detailed language that may enable him to express the meaning of ethics today. In this study we have emerged with the following:

1. An <u>ontology</u> that pictures wholes, designs, Gestalts, and fits man in as one who participates in the whole order of being.

2. A <u>hermeneutic</u> that relates the ultimate meanings born among our spiritual forefathers to the ultimate meanings being born in us.

3. A <u>personal view of man</u> that emphasizes his power of becoming, his self-direction as agent of action, his engagement in mutuality within a series of communities.

4. An <u>ethic for modern man</u> that speaks to his basic human nature as an answerer and places him as an accountable person in communion with all others before God.

5. A <u>way of communication</u> that "speaks forth" humanity in dialogue and that sets men into primal relation with one another.

   6. A <u>ministry</u> that reaches the pulsing inner being of man
and by the Spirit of healing in dialogue frees him from sin, and
by the Spirit of challenge in dialogue sets him forth for mission,
as a whole, responsible, Somebody in a world where the primary
threat is to be a Nobody Man.

The church of Jesus Christ is indeed under attack today, as

in every era. From within and without it is accused of inertia,

stuffiness and suicide. But a church that can bring forth to step

into the modern scene guides like our "authors" and that can move

among men with a truly human ministry like that of dialogue, may yet

be able to celebrate its continuing resurrection and its trust in the

Wisdom and Power of the God of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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